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III

THE LIVES OF ORION

BY

C. W. LEADBEATER

EDITED BY

C. JINARĀJADĀSA

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FOREWORD

AMONG the egos whose past lives have been examined, Orion stands out, in my mind, for one especial characteristic. He is a strong ego, with much power of will and determination ; but he does not seem to learn readily from his mistakes. He seems incapable of realizing intuitively, as an ego, that there is a Great Will whose purpose will not be gainsaid. He throws himself against that Will again and again, though each time he brings suffering to himself. He is like a bulldog who, when he has gained a firm grip on another dog's throat, cannot let go though beaten again and again, because they say of the particular conformation of his jaws. Similarly, when once a personality here below of the ego Orion sets out to achieve his plans, he will let nothing stand in his way, not even justice and duty, doing thereby immense harm to others, with a karmic rebound of greater harm to himself. The result has been that on three occasions he has made the same blunder, each time motivated slightly differently ; it is the blunder of rejecting the priceless opportunity given him of entering into the Inner Circle of the Great

Work and becoming a "pillar" of that temple whence he shall no more go forth.

The lives of Orion were examined in 1907, and published in *The Theosophist* from April, 1911. But after these lives were transcribed and typed, and the *Lives of Alcyone* were finished in *The Theosophist* of February, 1911, some earlier lives of Alcyone were examined, going as far as 70,000 B.C. Orion appeared in them, and in a dramatic role in one 29,700 B.C., Life No. 10 in the book, *The Lives of Alcyone*. I have taken this life and placed it as a "Prologue" to the series of Orion investigated in 1907, because the karmic consequences of a supreme blunder in this life of long ago are seen in several of the Lives now published.

Orion is an advanced ego, appearing often in various relationships to some who are now Adepts. But for a time, as revealed in these Lives, he makes a step backward in evolution, and reincarnates among egos who are primitive and backward in evolution. He has little akin, in his higher nature, with these backward egos. It is as if, since he will not learn certain lessons as to what is the Great Will among those of his own stature, he must be thrown back into a lower stage in evolution, in the hope that there, among the more violent vibrations of pain and suffering, something will penetrate into his nature as to right and wrong.

All of us move among two groups of egos, first, those of our own stature, to whom we are bound by affection and a common aspiration of service, and sometimes also unhappily by injuries committed against them. But our daily lives are cast also among some of a lower group, composed of younger egos who serve us in various relations as servants, employees, etc. We think that because we pay them a wage our karmic link with them is over. This is not the case. How we deal with them, our right or wrong action towards them, binds them to us and us to them. We and they must meet together in future lives for our mutual aid or for mutual injury.

A strange element in our human relations is revealed in the bond between Orion and Gamma. Gamma is definitely less evolved as an ego than Orion. The bond between them in the Prologue would suggest a strong and permanent friendship and loyalty between them. But as will be seen in the Lives, sometimes the friendship turns to callousness and even to horrible cruelty. In the present life, Orion and Gamma have met, with Orion as a child and Gamma older by thirty years. No special bond has developed between them.

We cannot think of any vice as a part of the ego in his own true home on the higher mental plane. A vice in a personality here below is the absence of the opposite virtue which has not yet been built into the

ego. Thus we find the personalities of Orion are often influenced by jealousy, by an envy that another is obtaining what he desires for himself. The mental and emotional reaction is not then resignation, but resentment instead, going to the extreme length of evil deeds. Nevertheless, in principle, all virtues exist in each ego; but they exist as dormancies and not as actualities. Reading the various series of Lives, it certainly seems that a virtue is called out or built into the ego very slowly indeed. In the case of egos who have grown much in intuition, perhaps two or three experiences will suffice; but with those who are not so endowed it would appear that dozens of the same experience are required to teach one lesson.

It was once said by an Adept teacher that evolution is a slow process, whose speed may be compared with arithmetical progression, *viz.* 2-4-6-8-10 and so on. But when once a man knows the truth, and lives it, then his progress is as if by geometrical progression, 2-4-8-16-32 and so on. Herein lies the value to one who knows "God's Plan, which is Evolution" as revealed in Theosophy. Though he cannot change his character into perfection by a miracle, yet he has more power of will to do so, just because he does understand. From the moment he gains understanding, he can know, if he tries, whether his will is parallel or not to the Great Will. Thence comes confidence to follow "the inner

gleam" of his intuition, a strength to withstand the shocks of karma, and an assurance that he not only has seen the Goal, but is treading the Path to it. He knows then that of all things it is this knowledge that alone matters ; for he then discovers within himself an inexhaustible reservoir of power with which to carve his way to his future in Eternity.

C. J.

PROLOGUE

The Lives of Alcyone, No. 10, 29,700 B.C.

AN unusually short interval separates this next life of our hero from the last. The Band of Servers was engaged this time in assisting at the founding not of a race but of a religion, for the great Mahaguru appeared once more to put the eternal truth before His people, though under a new symbol. We must presume that He saw this to be a suitable time for the promulgation of His teaching in the newly-formed Persian Empire, and shortened the heaven-life of His workers accordingly, so we find the same body of helpers awaiting Him. In Arabia, ten thousand years before, He had arranged the appointment of Surya as Chief Priest ; here Surya was already occupying that exalted position even before His arrival. The Mahaguru was not born into the race in the ordinary way, but took a body which had been carefully prepared for Him—the body of Mercury, the second son of King Mars, who was at the time monarch of Persia, while his brother Corona held Mesopotamia under him.

Mars had a family of seven children, four sons and three daughters—all of them characters with whom we are already acquainted. His eldest son and heir was Jupiter ; Mercury came next, and then our hero Alcyone, while Orion was the youngest of the brothers. The sisters were Elektra, Rama and Fides, while other old friends were to be found close by in the family of the Chief Priest Surya, who had Mizar, Yajna and Selene among his sons, and Sirius among his daughters. All these young people played, learnt and grew up together, and were to all intents and purposes members of one household, so the affection which already existed between them as the result of association in previous ages had every opportunity to manifest and to develop.

As our young people approached adolescence their affection took on a new form, and presently Jupiter married Leo, and Mizar took to wife Elektra, his fellow-member in that "trinity" of old. Mercury did not marry, as all his thoughts were turned in the direction of preparation for the coming of the Mahaguru. Unfortunately both Alcyone and Orion fell in love with the same young lady, Sirius, which led to sad complications, as we shall have to explain later.

In the five hundred years which had elapsed since the conquest of Persia there had been great progress, and the capital had grown into a fine, spacious,

well-arranged city, containing some magnificent specimens of architecture. Many other cities and towns had sprung into being, the population had rapidly increased, and but little waste land was now left all through the central provinces, for the scheme of irrigation ordered by the Manu had been thoroughly carried out, so that the country, once so barren, had become one of the most fertile in the world, and prosperity and contentment reigned in it.

The splendid ceremony which celebrated the occupation by the Mahaguru of the body of Mercury has been most beautifully described by Mrs. Besant in *Man: Whence, How and Whither*, and to that chronicle I refer all who wish to read a poetical account of a truly wonderful occult phenomenon—of the gorgeous procession amidst cheering thousands, of the sermon of the Mahaguru, of the Rod of Power, of the Fire which fell from heaven, and the Blazing Star which brings the blessing of the Ruler of the World.

The ministry of the Mahaguru is beyond all comparison the most important part of this tenth life of Alcyone, so this description, which perforce omits what has already been written in *Man*, is necessarily woefully incomplete, and should be supplemented by the reading of pages 298-302 of that work.

It was soon after the coming of the Mahaguru that Orion made a mistake which had far-reaching

consequences. Ever since early childhood both he and his elder brother Alcyone had loved their cousin Sirius. The young lady was very fond of them both and, being tender-hearted, did not like to announce a decision which must cause deep disappointment to one. The matter was settled for them by their parents, for Mars and Surya discussed the subject, and called Alcyone before them to ask whether it would be agreeable for him to take his cousin Sirius to wife. Alcyone replied that this was exactly what he wished, and her father then sent for Sirius and said to her :

“Our Lord the King does us the honour to propose a second alliance between our families, suggesting that you, my daughter, become the wife of his son Alcyone. Your mother and I could wish nothing better for you; yet since to marry those who are unsuitable is a heinous sin, we have sent for you to ask whether you are entirely willing to accept the Prince, and can love him whole-heartedly as a husband should be loved.”

Sirius modestly answered that she could and would, so the young couple were then and there betrothed, and an early date was fixed for the marriage ceremony. Surya gave them a solemn blessing, and they were full of joy; but as they turned away from the presence, Sirius whispered to her betrothed :

“This is the happiest day of our lives ; but it will be sad news for Orion.”

Alcyone started, and led her back up the long hall ; and when his father turned to him with surprise, he said :

“I ought to tell you, Sire, that my brother Orion also loves this lady, and that this betrothal will be a great blow to him.”

“Oh !” ejaculated the King, “and which of them do you prefer, young lady ? You seem quite happy with things as they are !”

Sirius blushinglly intimated that she was more than satisfied, and that she could not think of disturbing the King’s arrangements. So Mars said :

“Let it be ; the maid cannot marry you both, and it is fitting that the elder brother should be wedded first. I will see Orion and tell him that he must look elsewhere for a wife ; he is young yet, and there is plenty of time before him.”

But when the news of the betrothal reached Orion, he became furiously angry, and swore that the marriage should never take place—that before it should happen he would himself kill both Sirius and his brother. He sent at once for Gamma, who was a young man of low birth who had attached himself to Orion as a sort of confidential servant and flatterer ; and Gamma skilfully played upon his pride and increased his anger, thinking that he saw

his way to making something for himself out of a serious quarrel between the Princes. It was by that time dusk, so he set himself to spy upon the betrothed couple, and when he saw Alcyone go out alone he hurriedly called Orion to come and meet him. But when Orion saw Alcyone coming along, evidently full of joy and chanting to himself a well-known song of victory which was used by the Persian armies, his anger against his brother rose into maniacal fury, and he sprang out upon Alcyone and stabbed him with his dagger.

"That is well done," cried Gamma; "now let us quickly find the girl, and carry her away before an alarm is raised."

So under cover of the night they hastened to the part of the great building where Surya lived, and to the special apartments of Sirius, which were well-known to both of them. They thought themselves fortunate to find her with only one attendant, whom Gamma at once struck down. Sirius called for help, but was quickly overpowered, bound and carried away by the two men, who contrived to get her out of the gardens unseen, and then away into a great park which at that time of the evening was almost empty. But by this time the waiting-woman had recovered her senses and given the alarm, and a guard was quickly called together and set out in pursuit. A servant had seen two men running

in the direction of the park and carrying some large object, and was just describing this extraordinary event to his fellows and wondering whether they were not thieves who ought to be followed, when the clamour arose; so the guards knew which way to go, and for whom to look, as the waiting-woman had recognized both men.

By this time the moon had risen, and by turning out a whole regiment of men and spreading them rapidly over the park, they were soon on the track of the fugitives. Orion was too much obsessed by anger to calculate carefully, but Gamma had had some idea of striking out into the open country and hiding. The chase, however, began too quickly to allow him to carry out his plan; he was cut off from the direction in which he had meant to go, and the searching parties spread out so effectively that in a little time only one way was open for flight. This led the abductors up a slight incline, and soon the pursuers caught sight of them and began to converge upon them. Abruptly they came out upon the brink of a cliff overhanging a lake and saw that they were trapped, for the soldiers were close behind, and there was no hope in turning to right or left. Gamma threw himself down upon the grass with a curse, but Orion seized Sirius in his arms and leapt boldly out over the cliff into the water far below.

A great shout arose from the pursuers when they saw their prey had escaped them ; they rushed to the edge and looked over as well as they could, but in the dim light they could not distinguish anything clearly. They could not themselves get down to the shore without going a long way round, but their shouts and the mighty splash had attracted the attention of another party of searchers below, who were presently made to understand what had happened. There was no practicable beach just underneath, but several men plunged into the water from the nearest point they could reach, and swam hurriedly to the floating bodies.

Both Orion and Sirius could swim, and as it had fortunately happened that they struck the water in an almost erect position, they were not seriously injured, though they were to a great extent stunned by the shock. They came to the surface separately, and Sirius, being bound with scarves, could do nothing but float ; but as the water was tranquil this was sufficient. She declared afterwards that she never actually lost consciousness, whereas it would seem that Orion did, though his body also somehow floated. Thus the swimmers found them, and began slowly to make their way back to the shore with them. No boats were available at that end of the lake, but there were many helpers, and they contrived to throw into the water a great log, which

was most useful in supporting the swimmers. So eventually they got the unfortunate couple ashore alive, though only just alive; they covered them with borrowed garments and carried them home to the palace, where a night's sleep brought them back almost to normal condition. Gamma had offered no resistance when captured by the soldiers, and he had no excuse to give for his part in the affair but told the whole story quite callously.

Meantime Alcyone also had been found soon after he was struck down; they carried him to his chambers with many angry mutterings and threats of vengeance upon the enemy who had done this—for Alcyone was very popular. Doctors were hurriedly called; they dressed his wound, and administered to him some drug which brought him temporarily back to consciousness; and presently they had him asleep again, with every hope of recovery if matters went well, though he was desperately weak from having lost so much blood. He did not know who was responsible for the murderous assault upon him; he knew nothing, of course, of the abduction of Sirius, and though he noticed her paleness when she visited his bedside next day, he was readily led to suppose it due to sorrow and anxiety about his condition. The doctors forbade him to exert himself by talking, so it was many days before he learnt the facts.

Meantime King Mars was royally angry about the whole affair, and had Orion and Gamma brought up before him the next day for judgment. They had little to say for themselves. Orion admitted that his action had been wrong in stabbing Alcyone, and expressed pleasure at the news that he had not killed him ; but he declared that he had been beside himself with anger, and had not realized what he did, and he still thought that if he had been able to escape with Sirius all would somehow have come right. Mars spoke sternly of the disgrace reflected upon the royal line when the King's own son thus broke the laws which his office bound him to uphold, and of the hard necessity laid upon him of pronouncing upon his own son the same sentence of banishment as would have fallen for the same crime upon the humblest of his subjects. So he sent forth Orion and Gamma to make their living outside the Empire of Persia, telling them to atone by probity and industry elsewhere for the serious error with which their lives had begun in their native country.

Orion was not allowed to take leave of Alcyone, for the latter still knew nothing about the whole affair, and it was obvious that the excitement of hearing it now would have been disastrous to him. But his brother Mercury—or rather, the Mahaguru dwelling in the body of his brother Mercury—sent

for him before he left, and spoke to him gravely but kindly :

“ Son, you have acted unwisely. You have indeed done much harm, yet it is not the harm which is so serious ; it is the fact that you, who are one of us, should be able to do it. Selfishness is always evil, but doubly evil now, for it mars the harmony of our band just when it is needed for a special work during the short time that I can stay with you. Only once in thousands of years comes such an opportunity as has been offered to you in this life—to be among the foremost of those who help in the founding and spreading of a world-religion. But you have allowed jealousy to throw you out of the group of workers, and you must tread a long and weary road before you earn the right to enter it again. Go then and learn your lesson, so that when my Successor comes you may be ready to take your part in the work.”

Thus Orion disappears for a time from our pages—to reappear and to win his old place only some thousands of years later. Alcyone slowly recovered and presently married Sirius.

THE LAST 24 LIVES OF ORION

AVERAGE LIFE ON EARTH $53\frac{1}{2}$ YEARS

AVERAGE PERIOD BETWEEN INCARNATIONS 1017 $\frac{3}{4}$ YRS.

DATE OF BIRTH	PLACE OF BIRTH	RACE	SEX	AGE	BETWEEN LIVES
B.C. 23875	HAWAII	IV. 2	MALE	60	837
22978	MADAGASCAR	" 2	FEMALE	57	713
22208	MALACCA	" 7	"	56	612
21540	S. INDIA	" 1	"	36	0
21504	S. INDIA	" 2	"	48	0
21456	S. INDIA	" 2	"	64	1775
19617	BACTRIA	" 4	MALE	71	1245
18301	MOROCCO	" 5	"	67	1006
17228	POSEIDONIS	" 6	"	91	1447
15690	TARTARY	" 7	"	58	1125
14507	CANADA	" 1	"	56	780
13671	POSEIDONIS	" 2	FEMALE	38	1543
12090	PERU	" 3	"	85	2319
9686	CHINA	" 4	"	13	70
9603	POSEIDONIS	" 5	"	39	1239
8325	ETRURIA	" 6	"	65	1502
6758	TARTARY	" 7	"	52	1007
5629	INDIA	V. 1	"	62	1552
4015	EGYPT	" 1	MALE	71	1208
2735	S. AFRICA	" 2	"	48	809
1879	PERSIA	" 3	"	17	341
1521	ASIA MINOR	" 4	"	31	991
499	GREECE	" 4	"	76	2020
A.D. 1597	VENICE	" 4	"	23	276
1896		" 5	"		

THE LIVES OF ORION

I

HAWAII

THE lives of Orion are on the whole less regular and more stormy than the lives of Alcyone ; and they have two noteworthy peculiarities. First, whenever our hero makes a mistake, the karma of it descends upon him heavily in the next life—a system of ready-money payments. The retribution is severe but effective, and it cuts away the fault as by a surgical operation. Secondly, Orion has two groups of associates ; one, the group of Servers with whom we are already familiar ; the other, a set of decidedly undesirable acquaintances to whom we are introduced in the three lives immediately following. Whenever at the beginning of a life we see him surrounded by these people we know beforehand that the incarnation is going to be a troubled one ; but, on the contrary, when we find him in our own group we know that the influences brought to bear upon him will call out the best that is in him.

The lives are particularly useful for their very contrast with those of Alcyone. By a path so strewn with obstacles, through storms so terrible, the hero has reached his Master's feet, and has been taken in charge by Him. Many are the ways to the one goal.

We begin with a birth in 23,875 B.C. in the neighbourhood of Waialai, in Oahu, one of the Hawaiian Islands. Orion's father, Alastor, was a medicine-man and priest. The race to which he belonged was not the modern Hawaiian as it exists today, but an early Atlantean one. These people, like their successors, fell under the spell of a wonderful natural phenomenon which was so prominent amidst their surroundings, and worshipped the giant volcano of Kilauea—or perhaps the God of the volcano rather than the volcano itself. Their propitiatory offerings were usually to the Spirit of the volcano, the father of the present Goddess, Pélée, who was worshipped by the later inhabitants, the daughter having superseded the father in the thoughts of the people.

Occasional human sacrifices were offered to the God. The victims were supplied from among criminals, or from prisoners taken in war. When the supply of these was insufficient, a levy was made upon the general population. Orion's father, the High Priest, wore a horrid-looking head-dress, a huge mask much larger than a man's head. This mask had a hideous face with a large aquiline nose.

It was made of wood and was worn resting upon the priest's shoulders, extending high above his head. The garments he wore were made of beautiful feathers, the plumes of which were predominantly red when he officiated at sacrificial ceremonies, and yellow at the other less important functions. The garment itself was cut in the form of a semi-circle, and, when worn, served the priest as a cope.

At first Orion's father was High Priest of the Island of Oahu only, presiding over the temple dedicated to the service of the now extinct volcano of Diamond Head. But later he was appointed High Priest of the entire Island Kingdom, and for this reason moved to Hawaii, in order to superintend the daily devotions to the volcano of Kilauea. He had great power over the people through the fear with which he inspired them. They came to him to invoke his services when their crops were not good, or when their cows did not calve, or when they had enemies whom they wished to injure. The priest^a privately increased the efficacy of his magic by the use of poisons.

Orion's mother, Eta, was an insignificant kind of person who firmly believed in the priest, her husband, and was very much afraid of him. Orion was brought up in great awe of his father and of his supernatural powers. The father was not at all an affectionate man, but both parents were good to

the boy in their way. Orion was very fond of the sea and used to spend a great deal of time in it, often half of each day.

As eldest son, Orion had to become a priest in his turn, and therefore when he was about fourteen years old the regular education for the priesthood began. Even before that, his father taught him to recite various things which the boy did not understand, such as charms and invocations, pages and pages of which were taught to him by word of mouth. At the age of fourteen there was some kind of preparatory ceremony—the boy was made to go one whole day without food, and then cuts, slanting diagonally much as the ribs do, were made on each side of his chest.

Some bark was taken by the people from a tree and beaten out with stone clubs into a sort of cloth resembling canvas, or rather felt. Strips of this cloth were then taken to bind up the wounds, into which, however, small pieces of wood had been inserted to prevent the lips of the wound coming together, and so forming a slight scar. Instead, great grooves or lips of scar-tissue remained as evidence of his priestly candidature.

Round the young candidate they hung a necklace, and also a kind of belt made mainly of shells, with curious bits of coloured cloth arranged in a particular way. This costume had formerly

constituted the entire dress of the people, and had then been retained by the priesthood as distinctive insignia of their office.

As time went on, at intervals, at the ages respectively of 17, 19, and 21, Orion went through different ceremonies, again with fasting and invocations, and at the last of these his father administered to him a certain decoction in a calabash. Now this drink was made of bitter and unpleasant drugs, and had the effect of throwing Orion into a deep trance. While he was in this condition his father pronounced an invocation over him, the object of which was that the God should enter into him. Some great elemental creature did overshadow him, but did not retain control for long, as Orion soon recovered his own will. This fourth ceremony made him a full-fledged priest.

It is of interest to note that the methods, by which the High Priest "assisted" the Gods in rendering effectual the curses he was employed to utter, were such as to secure the results in any case, whether the divine intervention was forthcoming or not. For instance, the priests cursed the crops, but at night poured salt-water over the fields to aid the workings of providence.

Orion had many companions, both as a boy and as a young man, but he was not at all good to them and did not retain their affections, as he used his

father's position and powers to terrorize them into subjection to him. When they showed a lack of respect and deference, he threatened them with his father's powers, menacing them with bad dreams or dreaded diseases. As this sort of thing was kept up unremittingly, Orion, even as a young man, was much feared.

He fell in love presently with a young lady, Cancer, who was already the betrothed of Gamma, a particular friend of his.

This friend had always loved and admired Orion, but Orion did not exactly reciprocate his affection, though he was quite willing to use him. He decided that he wanted this girl Cancer for himself, and threatened Gamma with all sorts of magic if he did not yield her to him. Gamma and his betrothed were deeply attached to each other, and in spite of Orion's threats he would not desert her. Orion's curse was of no avail, so he determined to assist the God to rid him of his friend. Pronouncing the curse anew, Orion frightened his friend and contrived to administer to him a drug which produced a long and serious illness. Expecting to die, Gamma at last agreed to yield his betrothed to his rival, but eventually he recovered, and then felt a deep and abiding hatred to Orion in place of the old love. The girl knew all about this, and was not well-disposed to Orion ; but she was so much afraid of

him because of his threats to bring calamities upon her people, that by such means he was eventually enabled to secure her as his wife.

Orion delighted in the exercise of power and liked to see people cringe with fear of him. He excelled in describing the horrors with which he would visit them should they not fall in with his views. There was a distinctly cruel streak in his character, and it pleased him to have people afraid of him.

To the girl he was not very good, but had a manner of making her feel that "he was the gloomy God in the background and that no one should come near."

The priests were the real medicine-men of the Island, and through their services to the people gained great power and influence over them. If the priests were satisfied with the fees which a sick man brought to them, they did what they could to assist the patient to regain his health. If the fees were not satisfactory, the priests contrived to do away with the patient, and in this way they compelled the people to pay tribute to them.

The High Priest, while nominally subject to the King, was really more powerful among the people than the King himself. Orion's father was very vindictive, and, having contrived to quarrel with the King, tried to have him assassinated. The King

discovered the plot, banished him, thus depriving him of the office of High Priest, and appointed his son Orion in his stead.

Upon this Orion decided to cast off his first wife as no longer suitable to him in his present position. He caused her to be poisoned in order to get her out of the way, that he might be free to marry the King's sister, which he subsequently did.

His old friend Gamma learned of this and vowed vengeance. He would have liked to annihilate Orion, but was too much afraid of him. Orion fully reciprocated his hatred, although secretly his conscience troubled him. He soon, however, contrived to make it appear that Gamma was mixed up in a plot against the King. Gamma was thus cast into prison, and shortly afterwards an emissary of Orion's visited him in the prison, and succeeded in putting an end to him by poisoning him. Henceforth Orion grew more and more arrogant, and enjoyed seeing the people bow down and clear the way whenever he appeared. On the other hand, he seemed at times distinctly shrewd, and generally of better mental calibre than most of his fellow-countrymen.

He had usually the power of seeing the right in cases brought before him for judgment; but unfortunately this power to see clearly the justice of the case did not influence his decision, which was usually in favour of the man who paid the highest bribe, as

Orion had great desire for possessions. In this way he acquired a great hoard of feather-garments, many head of cattle and extensive property of various kinds.

Orion had a son, Cygnus, in whom he took great pride and for whom he felt great affection. His hoarded wealth was chiefly amassed for his son. He gradually thus acquired much power; moreover some of the magic of the country really worked in a small way, for the High Priest unquestionably had considerable mesmeric power. He was, besides, constantly on the watch for opportunities of impressing the people by means of fraudulent phenomena, and invented elaborate tricks, such as causing images to speak by means of tubes hidden within the body of the idol. He discovered, for instance, the periodicity of a geyser, and then pretended that the rush of water came as the God's answer to his invocations; he calculated the time of its flow, and gathered a great crowd together on that day to see it. He thus impressed them greatly, and brought them to do his will. On one occasion, he missed his calculation by an hour, and was forced to go on praying until the moment when the water appeared.

The old King eventually died and his son succeeded in his stead. Orion had managed the old King easily, but was not so successful with the son, in his efforts to direct the affairs of the whole kingdom as the power behind the throne.

There was an invasion from another island called Kauai. This war was caused by the fact that the King had, by the advice of the High Priest, treated very haughtily and disrespectfully an embassy sent from Kauai. Orion was employed to curse the invaders, but the curses did not prove effective and the enemy landed in spite of them. The King with his army drove them back, but Orion lost much of his prestige and power. Soon after this the King succeeded in stirring up the people against the High Priest once or twice, so that they openly refused to obey the latter. At this Orion grew angry, and a quarrel ensued in which a few people were killed. Not unnaturally, the relatives of those killed turned on Orion for revenge, and the King took advantage of this opportunity to depose the High Priest and send him away. As he was going away, a man who had a private grudge against him, seeing that he was no longer under the protection of the King, fell upon him and stabbed him. This man, Epsilon, who killed the High Priest after his downfall, had been the lover of Zeta, a sensitive, highly-strung girl, the daughter of a rich man. When Epsilon had wished to marry her, the High Priest had refused his consent (which according to the law of the country was required) unless the father of the girl would surrender to the High Priest a part of his patrimony. This the father had declined to do, and so Orion had

threatened all kinds of physical and supernatural ills. These threats had so preyed upon the girl's mind that eventually she had become insane. Her lover, of course, had then vowed vengeance, and took it now when the opportunity presented itself.

The High Priest had a long and uncomfortable life on the astral plane, being pursued constantly by those whom he had killed. He had, however, some heaven-life, because of his great love for his son.

II

MADAGASCAR

There is now a change of sex, and the birth in this race is a descent from the former one. The race is a fine, manly one, but less civilized than that in Hawaii, resembling more the Zulu. The people lived in palm-leaf huts. The Hawaiians wore clothes, but these people used only a sort of waist-fringe made of strips of hide, sometimes ornamented with shells and stones. The women wore necklaces made of shells and of rough stone beads. The country was fine and fertile, and the race a courageous one, full of fighting instincts. The people, however, were both pitiless and cruel, and were moreover cursed with an awful religion. They worshipped a God whom they called Saké, who was supposed to be

manifesting through a gigantic monster, a huge octopus, which itself was very old.

It lived in a salt lagoon, now cut off from the sea, but formerly connected with it. This octopus was an enormous, hideous beast, with a beak shaped like that of a parrot. Its body, in form like a balloon, was large enough to fill one of our ordinary-sized rooms. It had huge tentacles, forty feet in length, with great suckers on them, which at the base of the tentacles were as large round as a dinner plate, but grew smaller as they approached the ends.

The people were accustomed to feed this beast with human sacrifices, with criminals if possible, or captives taken in war. Failing these, the victims were chosen from among the people, as in Hawaii. The priests to whom it fell to choose the victims not unnaturally selected those whom they specially disliked; or picked richer members of the tribe, who, according to law, could pay a ransom, or buy a substitute at the priests' discretion.

These sacrifices were provided daily, but besides these regular ones, others were required for special occasions. The horror of the thing so affected the imagination of the whole nation that it frequently happened that a form of hysteria seized upon certain individuals, during the paroxysms of which they threw themselves bodily to the octopus. The priests were supposed to have the power to cast such a spell

upon the people as to compel them to make this self-sacrifice.

Orion was born in the year 22,978 and was again the child of Alastor, who was a celebrated hunter. He was indifferent to the girl, for he preferred sons, who could hunt ; but the mother on the other hand was fonder of her girl than of her boys. The child grew up good-looking and attractive. Incarnated in the same life was Cygnus, who had been the son of Orion when he was the High Priest in Hawaii, and Orion in this life fell deeply in love with him. Her father Alastor was, however, unfavourable to this union, and sold the girl to an older man who was for a time attracted to her, but later on tired of her. This man had already an older wife, Gamma, who, in the Hawaiian incarnation, had been the young man friend who was the lover of the High Priest's wife, Cancer, and whom the High Priest caused to be poisoned.

This wife Gamma was jealous and vindictive, and made things very unpleasant for Orion, but was afraid to do much while the husband continued to love her. Later, when the husband showed signs of becoming indifferent to Orion, Gamma became cruel to her and her children, bringing great sorrow and trouble on them. The husband had grown not to care at all about Orion, as he was now in love with Zeta, another person from the Hawaiian life. He

was however disappointed in this affair, for which reason he became very irritable and easily angered. He constantly ill-treated Orion and her children, because he was always stirred up against her by the stories which Gamma told. Orion tried to console herself with a love affair with Cygnus. The elder wife, Gamma, unfortunately found out the affair, and a great disturbance was caused. She managed that the husband should discover and pounce down upon the lovers, and then Cygnus was horribly mutilated before Orion's eyes, and afterwards thrown to the octopus.

The year-old baby whom she loved, and whom the husband wrongly supposed to belong to the lover, was thrown into the fire before her eyes. She herself was degraded to the position of slave in her husband's house, and very badly treated for twenty years. During this time she nourished intense hatred towards her husband and his first wife. Now Gamma had a little grandson, whom she loved passionately. One day after years of cruelty, Orion, maddened by suffering, seized this grandson, Epsilon, and pushed him into the fire. Gamma, who in turn, was maddened, ordered Orion to be seized, stretched naked on the ground, and fastened to pegs driven into the earth, near a hill of huge driver ants. These ants were great creatures much feared by the natives,

because they ate up every thing that came in their way. They attacked and ate the still living Orion, until only the bones were left, picked perfectly clean. This horrible process took nearly a whole day, and Orion's screams during the earlier part were heart-rending and indescribable.

The following astral period was exceedingly painful, Orion living over the scenes of her recent life, again and again. She however had a touch of the heaven-life, because of her love for her lover and child.

III

MALACCA

The race in which Orion next incarnated, as a girl, in the year 22,208 B.C., was one in many ways superior to the Madagascar tribe. The people wore more clothing, and their manner of living was also better. The boats were of a comparatively advanced type, being well-equipped and rigged as sailing vessels. The natives were a pleasant and superior people, not exactly Malays of the present type, but a sort of admixture between the Malay and Dyak races.

Our heroine lived on the sea-coast. Her father was a trader and owned a good many vessels; the principal commodities in which he dealt on a large scale being coconuts, cloth and gems. These people

also produced good woven cloth, which they dyed tastefully, and they seem to have imported silk goods from China.

Orion was a timid and shrinking little thing, born with an overwhelming horror of all creeping things, and a great fear of fire. As a child, she was often thrown into hysterics by the sight of creeping things. She had frightful dreams of her past life and its horrible termination, and was terror-stricken often by the sight and remembrance of the octopus. She was a delicate child, thin and pale, because of this lack of restful sleep, and as time passed she grew worse and worse in condition. Her parents were kind to her, and after a time called in a witch-doctor, who helped her and freed her from what he called the evil spirits. He succeeded by mesmerism in allaying to some extent her sufferings, and enabled her to have a deep drugged sleep.

Her nightmare was like a kind of memory. Such an impression had been made on the permanent astral atom, that it was not only able to send out vibrations of the effect of the life as a whole, but also those of detailed scenes. It was not so much a memory of the ego, as that of the permanent astral atom. The images were originally, in the child, radiated from this astral atom. Later she made thought-forms of these awful scenes, and these forms were very real and vivid.

She grew much better by degrees under the treatment, but was somewhat blunted and dazed thereby. In due course of time she married and had two children, to whom she was greatly devoted. The old witch-doctor, who cured her by his mesmeric treatment, became an intimate friend of the family, and his son, Zeta, conceived a passion for her. She, however, disliked and feared him. He threatened her that if she did not listen to his suit, he would persuade his father to bring back the old nightmares. She resisted him, but brooded over his threats, until the fear of the return of the old trouble became an ever-present horror to her. One of her great terrors had been her fear of fire. To add to this, her eldest child one day fell into the fire and was burned. This accident had a terrible effect upon the young mother, for it drove away her reason, and the nightmares returned as a permanency in her mind.

Her family took good care of her ; strange to say, they regarded her madness as a sort of divine possession by a God. There were periods when she seemed quiet and when she would answer questions. During these periods she appeared to be able to predict events still in the future, and in this way she gained the reputation of being able to prophesy. She frequently gave oracular replies, and it seemed to be the ego that answered when questioned.

Except for those short and infrequent periods, the life was one long duration of mental suffering, so that when death eventually came it was a great relief, although the final paroxysm was rather horrible. Her death came through shock. A great bonfire was lit to celebrate a victory. She saw it and was reminded of her hatred of fire, and rushing forward she threw herself into it with wild shrieks, and perished.

After death, on the astral plane, she was soon again quite sane. It was only the etheric part of the brain that had gone wrong. She was, however, still surrounded by the fearful thought-forms, and at first was haunted and terrified by them. Then kind friends (dead people who were aware of the facts) told her that these were illusions and gradually helped her to realize it, so that at last she became quieter and more peaceful. She had a life in the heaven-world and found happiness with her children.

Her character was certainly changed, and the cruelty was absolutely wiped out. There was left a desire for power, but there was no longer pleasure in seeing suffering ; so in the next life she would rather not inflict suffering, but only did so when it could not be helped. It would seem that most of the karma was well wiped out—first by physical suffering in the Madagascar life, and in this life by acute mental suffering.

IV

SOUTH INDIA

We now come to a very remarkable series of three lives which may in many respects be considered almost as one life, since there is no interval between them. The first of these occurs in the Nilgiri Hills, where in 21,540 B.C. Orion was born into one of the hill tribes of Southern India. She was a remarkably good-looking girl, much above the average of the tribe; very clever also in gaining any object she desired, but unscrupulous as to methods. She intended to make her way in life, and therefore she learned to read and write the Tamil language, an unheard-of accomplishment for a woman of her race. She engaged herself to serve a noble Tamil lady, living near Bangalore, in order to learn the habits of cultured life. She had developed some affection, and had a brother (Egeria) whom she loved very much. However, she loved power more, so she left him and her home, and took this service at the age of fifteen, rejecting with scorn the love of several suitors of her own race. She was appointed to attend upon the Tamil lady's daughter, Iota, a young woman of eighteen, and she soon succeeded in so pleasing her mistress that she became her confidante.

In this Tamil family, kept as an heirloom, was an enormous emerald credited with magical powers. It had been magnetized in Atlantis by one of the Lords of the Dark Face, and it was supposed to win for its possessor whatever he most desired, but it always brought misfortune in the end, because those who used it became the tools of the original magnetizer. Iota persuaded her father, who idolized her, to give her this wonderful stone, and to arrange for her a marriage with a young neighbouring King, Theo. She was not of royal birth, but the power of the emerald enabled her father to manage it. As the messenger who was sent to investigate reported the young woman as beautiful, the King accepted the offer, and sent an escort to meet her. According to the custom of the period, before leaving her father's house she put on a heavy veil, to be removed only by her husband. She took with her three attendants, our heroine being one of them. The journey occupied several days, and they encamped at night in tents.

During this journey a powerful temptation came into the mind of our heroine. Realizing that the King had never seen his intended bride, that (owing to the custom of the veil) the escort had not seen her, and that she herself was about the same height as her mistress and not unlike her in general appearance, she conceived the idea of murdering her mistress, seizing the magic emerald, and herself playing

the part of bride. After weighing the probabilities carefully, she decided to try it, and stabbed the young lady when asleep. One of the other attendants heard something and came in, but after a short struggle was also stabbed. Our heroine then awakened the youngest attendant, Kappa, with whom she had formed a friendship, and threatened her also with death, unless she kept the secret and supported the scheme. The attendant was very much terrified, but was forced at the dagger's point to agree, and also to help to carry away the bodies of the two murdered women.

The young lady's escort was camped as a guard around her, so Orion had to carry the bodies of her murdered mistress and fellow-attendant through this camp and elude the watch. This was achieved after encountering many dangers and having many narrow escapes. As she accomplished this successfully, she must have been possessed of much courage.

In the morning, Kappa was made to announce to the escort that the bride had suddenly decided to dismiss two of her maidens, and had sent them back home. As the late mistress had always been capricious, this was accepted merely as a fresh instance of her whimsicality, and the party proceeded without suspicion, and duly arrived at its destination. The heroine had of course possessed herself of the fatal emerald, and King Theo, glamourised by it, was

quite satisfied with his bride, who was indeed a very presentable person, and had caught to perfection the manner of her late mistress. The marriage took place with great pomp and ceremony. The King, much in love, behaved very kindly to his young wife. At first she was always afraid of discovery, but grew easier in mind as time went on ; she became much attached to her husband, attained great influence over him, and on the whole used that influence for good purposes.

The King was fond of hunting, and cared more for his pleasure than for administering with justice the affairs of the State. Orion took a fancy for listening behind the lattice to the cases which came before him for judgment. Her sharp intuition, and her knowledge of the ways of common life as a hill-woman, enabled her to judge keenly and justly ; and the King, by taking her advice, gained fame for cleverness in decision and for just judgment, and was therefore much pleased with her. She did, however, allow herself to be bribed when the consideration was large enough. She had several children, and was on the whole content, though often haunted by the dread of discovery. For example, the father of her late mistress once journeyed to pay his supposed daughter a visit, and she was put to many awkward shifts to excuse herself from seeing him. From this incident she acquired the reputation of

being proud and heartless, for of course the father thought it was because he was not of royal blood that she would not see him.

She specially loved her eldest son Cygnus, a fine handsome boy. After ten years the King took a younger wife, a princess of a neighbouring house, mainly for reasons of state, but as our heroine retained her influence unquestioned, she tolerated the new wife and was kind to her in a rather contemptuous way. The new Queen also had two children, a boy and a girl.

Trouble, however, now came from the younger attendant, Kappa, who alone knew of the two murders. When enquiries had been made about the two attendants who were supposed to have returned, it had been thought that they must have met with some accident, or been captured by robbers, and though some enquiry was made, nothing was discovered. Kappa (whom Orion had advanced to great honour at court, and had been married to one of the young noblemen who attended on the King) eventually revealed the story to her husband, and he at once began to blackmail the Queen in various ways. This continued for some time, causing her great fear and trouble, so that she began to carry poison on her person, to be used in case of exposure.

At length, encouraged by his success in blackmailing the Queen, this young nobleman formed a

plot to seize the throne, and forced the Queen to join his conspiracy. The plot was discovered, and the nobleman tried to save his life by revealing the whole story to the King, who was most astonished and feeling most of all the outrage to his royal line of having been deceived into marrying a hill-woman. The Queen was thrown into prison and condemned to death, and her children were banished. She was desperate at the failure of all her plans, but perhaps felt most of all that her beloved son would not now inherit the throne. She tried hard to obtain pardon or mitigation of sentence, but the King was obdurate. The day appointed for her death arrived, and she was in despair. As a last resort she seized her emerald, which she had been able to conceal about her, and passionately invoked any deity that might be connected with it to help her. A dark, strong-faced man appeared to her, materializing in the room in which she was confined. He listened somewhat contemptuously to her prayer, pointed out through the little barred window at a child (Sigma) playing in the courtyard below, and said :

“ Throw out the emerald to that child, and I will save you.”

She at once did so, whereupon he ordered her to take the poison. This acted instantly, and as she passed from her body, the child also fell as if in a

faint, for the magician forced out the child's ego from its body, and introduced into it that of the Queen.

V

SOUTH INDIA

At first everything felt very strange to her, because she could not at once gain control of the little body which she now occupied. However, the magician guided the child for awhile, and compelled her to secrete the magic emerald and bury it. When the guards came to conduct the late Queen to execution, she was of course found dead in her cell. The great emerald could not be traced and was thought to have been stolen. The little Sigma, whose body Orion had taken, was the daughter of the King by his younger wife. Orion was a little dazed for a time, and in spite of all the care which she tried to exercise certain differences were observable, so that the child's reason was supposed to be affected, and although later she seemed to recover somewhat, she was never quite the same as before. However, as she was only a child of six, her condition was not much noticed except by her mother.

The girl grew up, and while still quite young was contracted in marriage to Leo, who was the Crown Prince of a neighbouring kingdom. Her memory of

her past life was perfect, and she had great difficulty in controlling her speech ; but she learned by degrees to say nothing unsuitable to a child. Nevertheless, she occasionally forgot herself, and employed some of her old gestures or forms of speech, so that the mother half suspected that the dead Queen sometimes obsessed her. She never dared to show the emerald, but secretly dug it up before leaving home to marry the prince, and carried it with her.

Her husband proved on the whole good-natured, though arbitrary and subject to fits of passion when crossed. He was rather a dissolute man, but kind to her. After a time she showed him the emerald, alleging that the late King had given it to her when a child. He and his father the King were glad enough to possess the celebrated jewel, and it never occurred to them to doubt any part of her story.

This emerald had been magnetized long ago by a Lord of the Dark Face. It formed a link between the magnetizer and its possessor, so as to give the magnetizer a power over the other, who became his tool. The possessor's will to achieve that which he desired was greatly increased by that of the magician who had charged the gem with his thought. So on the whole the person who possessed the emerald was likely to obtain what he wished. This desire was generally for the love of one of the

opposite sex, or for power to influence another to do the will of the emerald's owner.

Its magnetism enabled Orion to dominate her husband, and since he acted under his father as governor of a division of the kingdom, she began to gratify her love of power by playing again her old part. She was ambitious and craved a wider scope, so she urged upon her husband to try to persuade his father to retire to the jungle and give up the kingdom to him. Eventually, by bribing the old King's spiritual advisors, she achieved her end, and her husband was proclaimed King. To a large extent she dictated, through him, the policy of the country, and schemed to enlarge its territory and her own power. Intrigues of this sort eventually involved them in war with two neighbouring kingdoms, which combined were obviously too strong for her, so she looked around for assistance, and decided to ask for it from the great Atlantean power.

The rulers of Atlantis at this time claimed the nominal suzerainty over much of South India, and they actually appointed governors for some districts, but more often the native Kings ruled practically without interference, though most paid a small tribute. This particular kingdom was entirely independent, but the Queen persuaded the King that it would be better to offer nominal adherence

to the far-away Toltec Empire than to be conquered by their neighbours. The King therefore sent to the Toltec Viceroy of South India saying that he was desirous of enjoying the blessings of the Emperor's protection against other native Kings. The Viceroy accepted his offer of allegiance in the name of the Divine Ruler of the Golden Gate, and sent word to the enemies that if they attacked the King, they would have to meet the Toltec armies as well. Consequently they refrained, and the Queen's policy triumphed, but at the cost of the independence of the country, and many of the people grumbled.

Later she suffered from some internal disease, and gradually wasted away and grew weaker. When she knew positively that her disease was incurable and that death was drawing near, she once more appealed to the Master of the Emerald. For a long time he took no notice, but at last he appeared to her in a dream, and told her that he would help her to take another body, and that it must be that of her own daughter (Theseus) whom she loved very dearly. She pleaded against this, but he quite callously remarked that it must be that or none. Thinking over it, the next day she resolved that she would not live at the expense of her daughter, but after many days of increasing suffering, she gradually came to the decision that it must be done. The instructions given in the dream were that she should

take the child and drown it, then hang the emerald round its neck and drown herself, and then she would be helped to seize the little body as she left her own. With much reluctance and horror she carried out this programme ; she took the child out to the river bank and with great difficulty held it under the water, until it lost consciousness ; then she laid its body upon the bank, hung the gem round its neck and threw herself into the river. She sank, and her body was drowned and swept away, and presently she was aroused in her new form by an attendant who had found the child-body and was weeping over it and chafing it.

VI

SOUTH INDIA

It took Orion some little time to realize that a change had once more taken place, and she only gradually grew accustomed to this new vehicle. At first remorse troubled her, but she soon forgot her scruples in the interests of the new life. Naturally in many ways she was an old-fashioned child, but as this body was older than the other which she had taken last time, it was harder to adapt. She was very impulsive, and thought only of herself, caring nothing for the discomfort caused

to others by her whims. The body was ten years old when she took it, and as it grew she gradually obtained more control over it. But in this body she could not advise the old King, and he was much less successful and diplomatic when left to himself.

Discontent had long been smouldering in the kingdom with reference to the unpopular submission to the Toltec power, and advantage was taken of that feeling to promote a rebellion. A battle took place, and the King was defeated and killed. The Toltec Viceroy sent a force to suppress the insurrection, which was speedily done, and then he appointed one of his officers to take charge of the government, until instructions arrived from Atlantis. Alcyone, the son of Leo, had an unquestionable claim to be placed upon his father's throne, and had he pressed it the Viceroy could not have ignored it. But there were many points to take into consideration and many difficulties in the way; Orion's action had made the dynasty unpopular, and he could not have seated himself firmly on the throne without wholesale slaughter, to which he would not consent. So after long and careful consultation with his wise wife, Herakles, and with the priest Mercury, he decided to let matters take their course. Indeed, as soon as he could be persuaded that his duty did not compel him to take action, he was glad enough

to put aside politics, for which he had no love, and devote his life to study.

His sister Orion saw clearly that the days of the independent kingdom were over, and thought it might be politic to fascinate the officer in charge. As she was clever and pretty, she had little difficulty in getting up a flirtation, and acquiring considerable influence over him. She was, however, wise enough not to marry him, as she reflected that a permanent governor would probably be sent from Atlantis, and she meant to lay her plans for ensnaring *him*. After nearly two years Sirius arrived as the new governor, a rather serious man of about thirty, just the age of her body, though she had held it only twenty years. She set to work to try her arts on him, but he did not seem very responsive at first. As she came to know more of him she was greatly impressed by his character, and ended by falling desperately in love with him. Under the influence of this feeling she put aside her arts, became natural, and therefore much more attractive to him, and he began to be strongly interested in her. Though before he came she had deliberately planned to marry him, she now experienced very mingled sentiments, passionately desiring his love and yet somehow fearing it.

At last Sirius formally demanded her hand in marriage from her brother Alcyone, who agreed, and she became his wife. He was a man of strong

principles and religious feeling, and she now looked back upon her previous proceedings in an entirely new light. She often wondered what he would think about it if he knew, as she found that he had decided opinions about truth and straight-forwardness, and was apt to be scornful and contemptuous of those who failed in these virtues. So she was glad that he could not know her past, but inconsistently, as she grew more and more deeply attached to him, she constantly felt promptings to tell him. The struggle between these opposing feelings became stronger as the years rolled on, and she was worn out with it, and felt as if she was torn asunder.

Sirius saw that she had some trouble, and repeatedly asked what it was, but she would not say. At last she made up her mind to go to Mercury, a learned spiritual teacher whom she had hitherto rather avoided, and under the seal of secrecy she told him the whole weird story, asking his advice. He said that in order to break the spell a great sacrifice was necessary; that she must throw the emerald into the sea, tell her husband everything and then renounce him and her six children and live as an ascetic. She was heartbroken, but was resolved to carry out his instructions; the teacher himself went with her to the beach, and she hurled the gem as far out into the sea as she could. Then

the teacher pronounced over her some solemn invocations, blessed her, and sent her home to tell her husband.

Sirius was very much shocked, upset and utterly confounded. At first he was too much dazed to do more than comfort his wife, but was soon able to rally his wits a little, and protested against the decision of the teacher that they must separate. He and his wife went together to call upon the teacher, and Sirius presented the case to him. Of course, he recognized that it was a terrible business to be connected with black magic, but he argued that for that very reason the two should stand together to see it through, for it was obviously the husband's duty to help and sustain his wife. He also urged that as there were six little children, it would be unfair to them to take away their mother. The teacher agreed that all this was true, but insisted that the husband must think of his wife's welfare as an ego; not so much of their common welfare and happiness in this life, as of her becoming free of this attachment to the black magician. The wife agreed, and named her trusted friend Helios as foster-mother of the children. She tried to persuade Sirius to marry this friend. He, however, while perfectly willing that she should take charge of the children, declined to make her his wife, as he said that if he did so,

he should feel himself not thoroughly faithful to Orion.

Orion then renounced her husband and children, and retired to a cave to lead the life of an ascetic. Sirius tried to make everything as comfortable as possible for her. He arranged with the teacher that he be allowed to visit his ascetic wife once a month, and these visits were kept up until her death about twenty years later.

The magician troubled her greatly at intervals for a long time, often appearing to her and commanding her to yield herself to him. The bond already existing between them enabled him thus to attack her; but, following the advice of Mercury, she never failed to resist with all her strength, though the struggle left her utterly exhausted. Mercury encouraged her, saying that this acute suffering was part of the price that had to be paid, but that if she were steadfast, final victory was sure, and when that was obtained, it meant perfect freedom through all future lives from that particular evil influence. After a few years of almost incessant contest, she developed strength enough to become almost indifferent to the assaults, and the intervals of attack decreased, until at last she was annoyed no more.

After this Mercury congratulated her and gave her a message from some greater person, to the effect that this which had been done was well done,

but it was part of the work only ; that there were still many weaknesses to eliminate at the cost of much suffering, and many powers to be acquired ; but that when after the storm the flower of her soul should unfold, “ she should become a Master-builder in the Temple, and through her the world would rejoice.”

So Orion died as an ascetic, and was regarded as a holy person. Sirius resigned, had another person appointed as governor, and returned to Atlantis, Alcyone accompanying him, as has already been described in the lives of the latter. (See *The Lives of Alcyone*, Life XXIII.)

Of all the lives which we have yet examined, this series of three is perhaps in many ways the most remarkable ; indeed, we might almost include in that remark all the six lives of Orion which have been so far laid before our readers. To dabble in black magic to some extent has probably happened to all of us at some time or other in our past history ; our very desire for knowledge upon occult matters is likely to have brought us into touch with it ; but this goes beyond mere dabbling, and involves much unscrupulous sacrifice of life. The twenty-ninth life of Alcyone may be considered as in some way corresponding to this, for he (or rather she) was then born into undesirable surroundings among a race of barbarous religious practices ; but he seems always

to have regarded them with horror, and eventually he broke away from them at the cost of an absolute renunciation of all that he knew as life.

That, however, is obviously a case widely different from this, for it is impossible not to observe that Orion, in his life in Hawaii, lived much as did his neighbours, not appearing to feel himself out of place among them, though cleverer than they. He continued in the same general attitude of mind until in the sixth life when he came under the influence of Mercury, Helios and Sirius, which re-awakened in him qualities until then to a great extent dormant, and brought him into a condition in which the Higher Self could once more dominate the lower.

Yet it is evident that in the first three lives of Orion we are watching, not the gradual upward progress of an ego who properly belongs to the semi-savage level of the people among whom he finds himself, but rather of one who is really much higher in evolution than they, but has been thrown down among them by the action of karma—probably as the result of some serious failure not long before the point at which we have taken up the enquiry into this series of lives.¹ That something of this sort must have happened is shown by the fact that in 70,000 B.C., we find Orion as the child of Mercury, and as his grand-daughter in 32,000 B.C., so that he has

¹ See the " Prologue."

evidently been one of the Group of Servers from a very early period. That the karma of that fall, whatsoever it may have been, is not far from exhaustion is shown by the other fact that in this present twentieth-century incarnation (the 25th according to the numbering of this series) Orion has the honour of being put upon Probation by Mercury.

Exactly what that means I have described in *The Inner Life*, p. 42 ; and it will be seen by reference to that description that a Master never admits a person even to Probation unless he considers that there is a reasonable probability that in the same incarnation he will be able to enter the second stage—that of Accepted Discipleship. So we have every reason to hope that, as the years roll on, Orion will tread in the footsteps of Alcyone and prove an able lieutenant to him. Progress so rapid as Alcyone's has been in this life is the result only of such a series of lives as he has lived, and it is not every one who can yet achieve that ; but the goal of Discipleship is the same for all, though the ways by which we aim at it, and the rates at which we move, are as diverse as our own dispositions.

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*Religious Ideas prevalent in India at the
time of Orion's Sixth Life*

We find that the language commonly used then in India was not Sanskrit, and ceremonies usually began with the word "Tau," not with "Om." The doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma were commonly known to the people. The Teacher (Mercury) knew of the Great Ones behind who sometimes helped. Some of the expressions which are familiar to us now were in use then also, as for example : "I am THAT." Mercury told the people that of all the qualities that they could develop, of all the qualifications they could possess, the most important was the power to recognise that all was THAT.

"You cut down a tree," he said, "THAT is the life of the tree; dig up a stone, THAT is what holds the particles of the stone together; THAT is the life of the sun, THAT is in the clouds, in the roaring of the sea, in the rainbow, in the glory of the mountain," and so on. These words are taken from a discourse of Mercury on death. In a book from which he read to the people there are well-known phrases, such as : "One thing is the right, while the sweet is another; these two tie a man to objects apart. Of the twain, it is well for who taketh the right one; who chooseth the sweet goes wide of the aim. The right and the sweet come unto

a mortal ; the wise sifts the two and sets them apart. For, right unto sweet the wise man preferreth ; the fool taketh sweet to hold and retain." (*Katha Upanishad* ; words in Mead's translation.) The wording in Mercury's book was not actually identical, but it was clearly the same set of verses.

There was another saying : " If one is killed, and I am the slain, yet am I also the sword of the slayer, and none slays or is slain, because all are one. There is no first nor last, no life nor death, because all are one in Him."

The books which Mercury used did not come from the Aryans ; this book from which he read (evidently the original of the *Katha Upanishad*) was written in the City of the Golden Gate in Atlantis by one who was a member of the Great Brotherhood. It belonged to a great collection, and had been handed down through many centuries. The Nachiketas story had not yet been connected with it.

In one temple there were no images at all. The religion was not sun-worship—at least not exclusively ; it was rather a worship of the powers of nature. Outside the temple there was a large bull in stone, facing the temple and looking in. Inside there was a curious arrangement—a depression, instead of a raised altar. Two or three steps led up to a great low square platform, paved with beautiful

tiles, and then there was a depression in the centre with a railing round it. People threw flowers into the depression, in the middle of which was a slab, which was specially holy ; it had some markings on it, but we could make nothing of them.

In another temple there were many images which were set in niches in its back wall. The people here wore a different dress from those in the former temple, and there were men who were distinctly priests, which was not the case in the other. The images sat cross-legged, and had not more than the natural number of arms. This was the old form of Jainism, presumably, and the images Tirthankars. Some images were naked ; others, which had a looped garment over them, were probably regarded as dressed, or perhaps a conventional symbol was intended.

In another temple a long way to the north, there was already a Lingam. There the Trimurti was fully recognized, though the names were not those used now. In one cave-temple there was a gigantic face carved out of the rock which was three faces in one, though it was so arranged that only one face could be clearly seen at a time. There was a great temple in South India which also contained a Trimurti. We tried to discover the meaning of the name attached to it, to see what idea was connected with it in the mind of its priests, and we found that

one priest thought of it as : " He whose life flows through all," while another had the idea that the three persons were : " He who opens the gates, He who guides the stream, and He who closes the gates." We saw no specimens here of the many-armed images which are so plentiful at the present time.

The priests had strong ideas about a " Lake of Light," which was also Death and Life and Love ; all streams led into the Lake of Light, whence-soever they seemed to begin. There were traces also of the theory that all that we see is illusion, but the only Reality is the Lake of Light. " We live in the Lake of Light and do not know it. We think of ourselves as separated, but we are each a drop in the Lake." The priests seemed to be perpetually urging the people to get behind the illusion of the senses, and to realize that **THAT** was the Real Presence behind all, and that the separated forms were the separated drops. " When they fall in again they are all one," they said, " and it is we ourselves who make all the sorrow and trouble."

They had a prayer to the " Lords who are the Light, who consist of the Light."

What is written above represents something of what was taught to the people, but in this small and strictly private family circle, Mercury was willing to go a little further, and expound the true

meaning of the symbols, and give far more information about the Lake of Light and the Lords who are the Light. He told them of a great Teacher who might be invoked by certain prayers and ceremonies, whose blessing might be called down upon them if they asked for it earnestly and with pure heart. They invoked Him at their meetings, and a response always came, and on two special occasions He even showed Himself. This Great One was He whom we know as the Mahāguru, and His special connexion with this group was that He had, in a previous birth, founded their religion and arranged that He would, as its Founder, respond to certain invocations made under proper conditions by its true adherents. He threw into the mind of Mercury the solution of their problems and the answers to their questions on religious matters, and once or twice certain personal directions were given to them, though this was a rare occurrence.

VII

BACTRIA

Our story carries us this time to quite another race and another country—to an old Turanian race, the fourth sub-race of the fourth Root Race, and to a town in the country which has since been called Bactria, to the north of Persia. After all the strange experiences through which Orion had passed in female bodies there was now a change of sex, and this time he was born in the year 19,617 B.C. as the son of parents in good condition, owning lands and possessing considerable wealth. The family had been a great and a rich one, but the population had increased so rapidly that they were at this time somewhat crowded out, and were not doing so well as formerly in money matters, though still respected as people of consideration. His mother was Helios, the lady who had been chosen by him in his last incarnation to look after his children when he adopted the ascetic life. His father Lomia was proud of his family traditions, and bitterly discontented at the lack of sufficient means to keep them up to the old level. Helios, though sympathizing with her husband's desires, usually preached patience and contentment. They had a son Achilles (several years older than Orion), to whom the mother was

passionately devoted, and as he grew up he entered eagerly into his father's schemes.

This was the environment of Orion's earliest years, and all the influences around him tended to inculcate the re-establishment of the family fortunes as the one thing on earth to be most desired. There was also a sister Egeria, who was younger than Orion; he was always kind to her, but often wished she was a boy. The children received a certain amount of education, and Orion was taught to write a curiously clumsy, semi-hieroglyphical sort of script, drawn in large coarse characters; but this accomplishment was not acquired by the great majority of the nation, and there were but few books, only some collections of religious or philosophical maxims, and others of medical lore or such as referred to manufacturing processes, being all that the investigators noticed. The religion appeared vague and ill-defined—more ancestor-worship than anything else. The people gathered occasionally in the temples, and verses and invocations were recited, but the temples were absolutely undecorated and without images. The style of architecture seemed curiously low and heavy to our modern eyes.

Orion was much loved by his mother; but the father and the elder brother, though kind, regarded him and everything else merely as so many pawns in their game to restore the family fortunes. The

expansion of the country was impossible, as a strong and highly civilized power existed to the south, which always tended to encroach upon Bactria and absorb it, while on the other sides it was surrounded by warlike marauding nomad tribes. Large numbers of the people were already migrating eastward, but Orion's father declined to abandon his ancestral domains. When Orion was a young man of eighteen, he married Cygnus, a nice girl, and they had four children, the eldest of whom was Vesta; then Rigel followed as a girl and Bella and Parthe as boys. Orion had all sorts of plans and would have liked to direct affairs, but the father and the elder brother managed everything and kept it all in their own hands. He was always seeking restlessly to find an outlet for his energies, but as the family would not stoop to trade, there seemed nothing for him to do.

At last Muni, a poor man whom he had befriended when in suffering and extreme poverty, told him in gratitude a strange story of a vast buried treasure upon which he had come by accident, while hunting in the country to the north. He had brought away with him what little he could carry, intending to return with assistance and remove the rest, but had met with an accident on his return journey, and was then very weak and not likely to recover. Orion was much

interested and excited by this story, and when the narrator died he mentioned it to his father and brother who, however, regarded the tale as improbable and unworthy of investigation. The dead man, it seemed, had a daughter in a distant city, and he had begged Orion to go and search for the treasure, and hand over the greater part of it when found to this daughter, retaining only a certain portion for himself as a reward for his exertions. But Orion thought that if he could secure it, it would be better employed for his own purposes.

The thought of the hidden gold inflamed his imagination ; he brooded over it, and finally decided, in opposition to the advice of his father and brother, to set out in search of it. Since they would not help him, he could afford but a small and poorly-equipped expedition. He and his few followers wandered for weeks among the hills, running short of food and enduring incredible hardships, but could not succeed in finding the place described by the dead man. At last they were captured by a band of men from one of the fierce nomad tribes, and enslaved. They were very harshly treated ; most of them died, and Orion, though he survived, had twelve years of great suffering.

Meantime his wife and children at home had long mourned him as dead—all except his second son, Bella, who against all arguments persisted in the

belief that his father was still alive, and announced his intention of going in search of him as soon as he was old enough. When he was eighteen he decided that he could no longer delay his rescue expedition, and appealed to his grandfather and uncle for help. They regarded the plan as chimerical, and refused, whereupon he turned to his elder brother Vesta. Vesta did not really believe in it either, but still he had a sort of inner prompting that there might be something in it. As he had recently married Aldeb, and had some children, naturally he felt that he could not leave home, but was willing to help to fit out his brother's expedition.

Bella did not know in the least where to seek his father, having only his childish memory of the treasure story to guide him. He had been eight years old when his father left home, and that father was then thirty. The treasure was not Bella's object ; his one idea was to rescue his father. He supposed that Orion had met with some disabling accident, but was firm in his conviction that he still lived. In boyhood he had already realized the possibility that his father might be a captive among the tribes, and he had therefore set himself to learn something of their language and customs. Thus, when the party caught sight of any wandering bands, Bella always tried to escape observation, concealed his party if possible, and then himself, at the

risk of his life, entered the camp of the nomads in disguise to search for his father.

After two years of adventure, he at last found him, a slave in one of the bands, but had great difficulty in recognizing him under such changed conditions, and after twelve years of toil. Between them they contrived a plan of escape, and Bella, who by this time knew the hills well, was able to conceal the little party successfully. During the wanderings of the tribe by which he had been enslaved, Orion had seen the landmarks described by the dead man as indicating the position of the treasure, so he was able to guide Bella's party to find it, and dig it up. After much labour and various vicissitudes they brought it safe home, to the joy and astonishment of the rest of the family.

Orion's father was now dead, and the elder brother Achilles was the head of the family. After all the members of the little expedition had been handsomely rewarded, there was still a fortune left. As it seemed almost certain that this Bactrian nation would be absorbed by the stronger power from the south, Achilles, Orion, Vesta and Bella held a family council, and after much deliberation decided to join the constantly increasing stream of eastern migration, taking with them their gold. They travelled in a vast caravan, moving very slowly, driving flocks and herds with them, and camping each winter

during the coldest months. The family eventually settled in a fertile country in the southern part of China, and made for themselves a comfortable home.

Their wealth made them people of consideration in the new community, and Achilles was presently appointed chief of a section or colony, and managed its affairs very ably. As time went on more of our characters appeared upon the scene, for Vesta's son Mira grew up and married Selene; their sons were Sirius, Alcyone and Ajax, and their daughters were Vega and Mizar. As soon as Orion's great-grandson Sirius became of sufficient age to understand anything, the old man and the little boy were devoted to one another and were always together. The great-grandfather drew the boy to his side, and told him endless stories about his captivity and the great search for the treasure, and the boy's grief was deep and lasting when the old man passed away at the age of seventy-one.

Orion's character showed very marked improvement since the Indian days, and even already the power to love was very strong; but there was still a good deal of selfishness and desire for wealth and power, as well as some unscrupulousness in methods. Nevertheless the transformation since the life as a priest of the volcano in Hawaii four thousand two hundred years before was simply marvellous, and most unusual in the time.

VIII

MOROCCO

On this occasion we find our hero taking birth in the year 18,301 B. C. in an Arab race, though not in Arabia, but in North Africa near Morocco, on what was then an island in a sea which filled the present Desert of Sahara. He was born on the sea-shore, and was the son of an important and influential man, who owned both land and ships, and was evidently a trader as well as a cultivator.

Orion was passionate if crossed, determined to have his own way, and liable to unreasoning fits of anger if anything interfered with the accomplishment of his purpose. While still a boy, he fell into bad company at an irrationally early age.

Before he was quite twenty, he married Sigma, not a woman he loved, but one selected for him by his parents. The marriage, in fact, was entirely arranged by the parents of the two young people, without in the least consulting them. They had several children. Orion fell in love later, not with his wife, but with Epsilon, a woman of rather unpleasant character. He made no secret of his feelings, and neglected his wife and home, much to the disgust of Sigma. Epsilon, who was beautiful, had many admirers, but she favored Orion, because he

made her many presents. But Cancer, who was the son of the governor of the district, also admired her, and he was even richer than Orion and possessed the additional charm of having more power socially. So finally she bestowed her favours on the governor's son, much to the infuriation of Orion, whom she still kept dangling after her. But one day Orion found them together in a wood, and mad with fury rushed on them and grappled with the lover. The girl fainted or pretended to do so. In the struggle Orion killed the governor's son, and then picking up the fainting girl, ran off with her. She awakened, and discovering herself in Orion's arms, began to scream and struggle. The path that Orion took in his flight with the girl led along the edge of a ravine, and when she endeavoured to free herself they both lost their balance and rolled off the bank into the ravine. In falling, Orion was caught by some bushes, and so was not seriously hurt, only receiving a few scratches. The girl, however, rolled over and was severely injured, and Orion, finding her unconscious when he rushed down to rescue her, thought she was dead.

In the meantime, some people who had seen the struggles and heard the screams came rushing and shouting to the scene. Suddenly Orion realized that the man he had just killed was the governor's son, and that here also lay the body of a girl whom

his ill-fated passion had slain. He could not hope to have an impartial trial ; so, filled with stormy emotions, he fled to the sea-shore, followed by men in close pursuit. As he reached the shore, his heart leaped as he saw a sailing vessel, which he recognized as one of his father's, tacking to go through a sea-passage between the coast and a large rock rising out of sea. He jumped desperately into the water, and after violent efforts finally reached his father's vessel. The sailors dragged him on board much exhausted, and he was carried away in safety, under the impression that the girl was dead.

In the course of the voyage, the vessel passed out through the Straits of Gibraltar. Storms were encountered in the Atlantic, and the frail vessel built to weather the milder waters of an inland sea, soon became much battered, and finally sank, yielding to the heavy blows of mighty waves. Orion grasped a spar as the ship disappeared, and after being tossed and beaten for many hours, eventually reached land, and was thrown unconscious upon the shore. He waked to find himself on an island (possibly the Great Salvage), and utterly alone, as it was uninhabited save by animals. There was fruit in profusion, and by killing some of the animals for food he was able to live.

On this island he lived in silence for twenty years. The island was so utterly out of the course of trading

vessels that there was little hope of rescue in his heart, except by a ship driven out of its course or by some private vessel. Solitude and constant introspection produced a great change in Orion's character. As he had much time to think, he gradually realized the fact that he had lived an unworthy life—that all these trials to himself and others had been brought about by his passionate selfishness and wilfulness; and he vowed that if he were ever rescued, he would live better. Such was the effect of this new direction of his thoughts, that after twenty years of solitude he was greatly sobered and looked much older than his age would warrant.

At last a vessel did appear, driven out of its course by adverse winds; he was taken on board, but could hardly speak because of his long silence. He was conveyed to the mainland, and his rescuers gave him clothes, but no money. He started on foot to Morocco and found it a long wearisome journey, full of hardships, but at last he reached his own country. Fearing to make himself known until he had found out the state of affairs, he engaged in menial work to enable himself to procure the necessities of life, all the time carefully making enquiries as to his own family, the governor's, and that of the girl. He eventually learned that the governor's family had all moved away, and that his own had entirely disappeared,

and so he felt that he was in no danger now of being recognized or of being brought to trial.

He was told that only one female member remained of the girl's family. As she lived in a quiet place, he thought that by lingering near it he might have an opportunity of seeing and possibly recognizing her. One day as he watched he saw a woman who resembled the girl-friend of his youth, but she was much older in appearance. Feeling sure that that girl was dead, he thought that this one must be her daughter and did not hesitate to meet her. She, however, knew him, and after the greetings were over, told him how she had recovered from the fall, though severely injured and in consequence lame ; how after she had become crippled, all her former suitors had left her, and she had been much alone. During all these years she had been thinking of what had transpired, and had come to the conclusion that she had not been right in her dealings with her two men friends, and she afterwards felt herself to blame for what had happened. In her reveries she had grown to think that Orion was a better man than the other, and that she had not been fair to him.

Epsilon helped Orion to search for his wife and children, but they were not to be found, and no one knew anything of their former movements. Eventually these two married, and lived quite

peacefully, as both had learned to be forbearing. He was rather broken down in health, but still had something of his old desire for power. She had some money, and with this he started in trade ; and from this time to their death they lived a comparatively quiet and ordinary life.

IX

POSEIDONIS

The grim drama of this ninth life of Orion opened in the southern part of Poseidonis, where he was born in the year 17,228 B.C. in an Akkadian race, which, though practically independent, still paid tribute to the Toltec Emperor. The people were manufacturers and traders, rather than agriculturists. Here, on the borders of the great Toltec Empire, the country was in an unsettled condition, and the merchants suffered much from the depredations of pirates, whom the authorities seemed unable to repress. The pirates lorded it over the people, terrorizing outlying districts, and compelling many of the merchants to pay them a kind of tribute to obtain immunity from their attacks. Orion was the son of a rich merchant, who loved the boy and regarded him as very promising. From quite an early age he received a sort of commercial education;

he learned the values of various commodities, especially of gems, and was taught how to buy as cheaply and sell as dearly as possible. As he grew to manhood his doting father made him a generous allowance, but Orion soon exceeded it. He plunged deeply into the less reputable so-called "pleasures of life." As his father trusted him entirely, Orion fell into the habit of pilfering small sums from the business to add to his allowance, large though it was.

He became infatuated with Gamma, a woman of poor character, who constantly exacted rich presents from him, and urged him to rob his father on what she called a "gentlemanly scale." In order to meet her extravagant demands he arranged a much larger defalcation, receiving payment for a certain shipment of goods, but not handing the money over to his father. By various excuses and falsehoods he covered this for a time, but at last saw that discovery was imminent. The only person who could really prove the case against him was Zeta, the young man who had brought him the money; and Gamma advised him that that young man should be disposed of in order that the secret should not be told. Opportunely for them a pirate ship was at hand on a neighbouring coast, and the woman suggested that the inconvenient witness be sold to the pirates as a slave. Orion contrived this, and for the moment the secret of the crime was undiscovered.

The money was again demanded from the merchant who had already paid it ; then the missing messenger was supposed to have absconded with the sum, and his family was disgraced and brought to ruin.

Orion felt some compunction at this, because the sister of the abducted victim was a friend of his, with whom he had had intimate relations ; but his present mistress easily persuaded him to say nothing, and let events take their course. To satisfy Gamma's insatiate rapacity he soon had to undertake further peculations, and presently was in instant danger of discovery. In despair he reproached the woman for whose sake all these crimes had been committed ; she was very angry, and told him that if he would not make the effort to obtain more money for her, there were plenty of men who would. There was a great quarrel, for in reality she was growing tired of him, so she arranged through other men friends that he in turn should be seized and sold to the pirates. This was done, and his merciless owners forced him to work as a galley-slave.

He was eventually carried to an island where the pirates had their headquarters, and there met Zeta, the victim that he himself had sold to the pirates years before. The victim at once fell upon him and tried to kill him, but the pirates dragged them apart, and hearing the story, at once determined by a

refinement of cruelty that these two men should be chained to the same oar and forced to work together. Night and day for many years they were never for a moment free from one another, and this close association bred such bitter hatred that they constantly quarrelled furiously, tried even in their chains to fight, and consequently were severely beaten by their task-masters. Gradually they were worn down into sullen submission, and for months did not speak to one another.

One day when the oar broke and jammed in the port-hole, Zeta instinctively held it off Orion, and thus, at the cost of a tremendous strain to himself, saved him from being severely hurt and crushed by it. Orion had often had some feelings of remorse and repentance, and this act brought them to a culmination, and for the first time they spoke kindly to one another. Fellowship in misery now made them friends instead of enemies. They often discussed in whispers plans of escape, but they never could see any way in which there was the least hope of managing it. Their opportunity came at last, for the galley attacked a vessel which proved too strong for it, and manoeuvred so as to saw through its bank of oars with her prow, thus breaking them one by one and rendering her helpless. Many slaves were killed by the broken oars, but some few were torn away from their benches in the crash, and among

them were our two. The disabled galley drifted to the rocks and the survivors were washed off into the sea. Zeta was badly injured ; but Orion, though much hurt himself, contrived to get him ashore somehow through the surf. He obtained help from some fishermen, and together they carried the wounded man into one of their huts, where he lay for many days. As soon as Orion himself recovered, he agreed to work with the fishermen in return for food and shelter for both, and devoted every moment of his spare time to nursing Zeta.

The latter had a very long illness, being seriously injured internally, and it was more than a year before he was able to take the road ; even then he was crippled and weak. Orion attended upon him and helped him along carefully, and as beggars they slowly made their way northward along the coast towards the great city. Arriving there, Orion found employment with a goldsmith, who at first engaged him out of pity, but afterwards began to find him useful. Orion was now about forty-two, for they were fourteen years captive among the pirates, and it was now two years since their escape. Orion gradually worked his way on, and his knowledge of jewels was found useful. All this time he supported the crippled Zeta, until the latter died.

The goldsmith died after Orion had been with him nineteen years, and as the heirs were otherwise

occupied, Orion succeeded to part of the business. He had grown hard and . . . ; though the business was not large, he amassed wealth by degrees, but after ten years' labour lost all through the dishonesty of a workman. He was now too old to obtain regular work, so he drifted gradually downwards, became a beggar again, and lived in poverty and obscurity to extreme old age.

In this life as in the last, he began with good opportunities, but his desires were so strong and uncontrolled that they carried him away. When a desire seized him he *would* gratify it at any cost to others, and was quite unscrupulous as to his methods while sweeping obstacles out of his way. In each case opportunity for reflexion and repentance was given him, in the first merely by long loneliness, in the second by a shorter period of positive suffering. In both cases he took to some extent advantage of this, and the latter part of the life showed its effect.

During these two lives—the Semite and Akkadian—he was taken away from those egos who had helped him, the object being to see whether he could yet stand alone. The success was not very great, although things came round better in the end.

X

TARTARY

Orion was next born in the year 15,690 B.C. in a Tartar race in Central Asia, a race which might be said to be nomad on the whole, though some of its members had already begun to settle and build cities. There was a good deal of barbaric splendour about it, but little education. The women wore rough gold ornaments in great profusion, but they were taught little except to prepare herbs medically and to dress wounds. Orion was the son of Aglaia, a high official, a sort of president or governor of a district, whose duty led him to travel constantly all over his province. He frequently went in state, carrying all his family and retinue with him in a caravan. In the intervals between these journeyings they lived in one of the principal houses in the chief city of the province.

Orion's training was almost entirely military ; he was taught to ride almost as soon as he could walk, and also to shoot with a bow, and to use a lance, a short sword and a club. Unfortunately, in the same city lived Gamma, who had exercised such an evil influence over him in his previous life. He was scarcely sixteen when the shadow of that unprincipled woman fell upon his life again. She was

already secretly married without the consent of her parents but nevertheless conceived a passion for Orion, and soon succeeded in getting him into her toils. As before, she wanted costly gifts, and the infatuated boy was hard put to it to find means to satisfy her wild desires.

This went on for some years, and the previous life might to a great extent have repeated itself, but for the entry upon the scene of a second young lady, Helios, whom he had the opportunity of saving one day from some robbers on a country road. She was the exact opposite of his older charmer—wild and free, yet shy and modest, a lovely child of nature, while the other woman was bold, brazen and artificial. As she was riding along with one woman attendant, Kappa, two ruffians rushed up, seized the bridles of the horses, and tried to tear a necklace from her throat. Orion, observing this, rode up hastily and struck down one of the robbers, whereupon the other fled; he then supported and reassured the frightened maiden. She was naturally grateful for his daring rescue, while he was deeply impressed by her beauty, and they probably both enjoyed the next half-hour as they rode along together. When they approached the town, she seemed to expect him to leave her, so he drove away politely. As they parted he ventured to ask her name and was disagreeably surprised to learn that

she was the daughter of a house between which and his own was a bitter hereditary feud. Their ancestors for generations had been slaying one another at sight, and each had been brought up to regard with the utmost horror and detestation everything connected with the opposite faction. He rode off home greatly crestfallen, for he had determined to improve her acquaintance, and he now realized that there would be the most formidable difficulties in the way.

The impression made upon him increased instead of decreasing as the days wore on, and he felt that with this sacred image in his mind he could not go to see the other woman. When some days had passed, the latter, anxious lest she should be losing hold upon a valuable source of revenue, sent to fetch him. He went, because he could not well help it, but his thoughts were otherwise engaged, and he naturally seemed cold and distracted, so there was a quarrel. The woman wanted more money from him, but he was not now interested in her, and felt bored and uncomfortable. He tried to resume the old relation, for he was in despair about his new love, not seeing how he could reach her, and feeling himself to be altogether unworthy of her even if he could. His attempts, however, were unsuccessful; the adventuress detected the hollowness of his pretences, and there were incessant quarrels and scenes between them. He brooded more and more over the mental

image of the fair girl whom he had rescued, and day after day he found himself hanging round the house to which she had gone, though he did not even know whether she was still there or not. He could not forget her face, though he had seen it only once ; he tried to draw it, but was dissatisfied with the result. He struggled long against his feeling for her, but it grew even stronger. He gave up the other woman altogether, and entirely reformed his life.

At last he determined that it was useless to fight against his love any longer, so he solemnly informed his father of the facts, and declared that in spite of the family feud he *must* have that young woman if she would have him. The father thought him mad, would not hear of the proposition on any consideration, and drove him from his presence with contumely. Orion, however, stood loyally to his resolution ; and his father, finding him intractable, finally drove him from the homestead and disinherited him. The young man was thus left in a very peculiar position, thrown out penniless on the world for the sake of a girl whom he had seen only once, while he did not even know whether she cared in the least for him.

It seems distinctly an improvement on the last life, that for the sake of true love he should thus be willing to throw aside the bad woman and reform his life, and then to lose all that had made up that

life. He rode off with his horse and arms, but with little else; and since he was thus cast out for the sake of his lady-love, he thought he might as well cross the steppes to the town where her home was. Arrived there, he debated with himself as to what he should do, for he knew that if the girl's relations should discover him they would probably kill him at once on account of the feud. He decided eventually that boldness was the best and worthiest policy, and that he ought to go openly to the girl's father and claim her hand; but his difficulty was that he did not know whether she would have him, and he naturally wanted to discover her sentiments before he intruded.

Just as he was getting quite desperate, he had the good fortune to meet the young woman who had ridden as an attendant behind his lady-love on the memorable occasion. He at once claimed acquaintance and led her on to talk about her mistress. She was distinctly encouraging, for she said that her mistress had often spoken of him and would certainly be glad to see him, and furthermore she tried to arrange a meeting. It was time that some fortune should come to him, for he was very poor; often he had not even enough to eat, and his pride was too great to allow him to make friends with anyone. He was at the rendezvous next day, and was overjoyed to see the mistress of his heart

appear as well as the maid. He poured out his tale of love, and she blushing admitted that she could not feel indifferent to such devotion. He was transported with joy over this, but began to consider what he could do, for he felt it quite hopeless for a penniless outcast to approach her father on such a subject. She intimated her willingness to wait for him, but expressed a fervent hope that it might not be too long. Finally they decided that they could not possibly wait, and that he must see the father forthwith.

A temptation came upon him to go to the father without saying anything of the fact that he had been disinherited, and to represent himself as coming on behalf of his family to propose that the hereditary feud should be ended by a marriage; but he decided that such deceit would make him unworthy of her whom he loved, and for this reason he abandoned the idea. When he appeared before the great rambling castle-like building which was the home of her family, and announced his name to the sentinel, there was great excitement. He was carried before the chieftain, and boldly told his hereditary enemy that he wanted to marry his daughter. The chief was too amazed to be indignant; he thought the young man mad, and his first impulse was to throw him into a dungeon, but on second thought he simply had him cast out of the

castle with a warning not to come again on pain of death.

Orion thought himself fortunate to have got off so easily, but did not quite know what to do next. He saw that he must somehow earn money for food, and resolved to turn to work of some kind. He had not, however, been brought up to do anything useful, but he reflected that in the surrounding country he could support himself by hunting; so he lived for a while a kind of gipsy life. He came into town frequently, and though he could not see his lady-love, he often managed to meet the maid, and to receive and send messages through her. The maid's advice was that he should waste no more time, but at once carry off the mistress of his heart; he replied that he would be very willing to do so if he were able to take her to a palace which was worthy of her. The next time the maid came, she brought a message that gorgeous surroundings were unnecessary and love in a cottage would be quite enough, and after that matters were easily arranged. She stole out one day, and they fled together.

The father was furious when he found that she had disappeared, even though he did not know of the young man's part in the drama. He sent in pursuit of her, but they had had a good start, and so got clear away, hiding themselves among one of the wandering tribes. It was certainly an evidence

of real love that these two, who had been used to every luxury that the period could afford, should resign everything for the sake of being together, and live in the queer little black huts of an uncivilized tribe who drove their cattle through the desert from pasture to pasture. (It will be remembered that in the last life Orion did not give up his position voluntarily, but had to be carried off). These people were to a certain extent marauders also, for they levied contributions of food from the weaker of the settled tribes; but they made our fugitives welcome, and they wandered over the country with them for years, passing far away from their original home.

Being alone together among those who were comparative barbarians, they reacted upon one another very powerfully. Orion was full of the idea that his wife's life had been a beautiful and pure one, while his own had been sadly stained, so he thought of her always in a humble and adoring way which was unquestionably good for him. She, on the other hand, thought of nothing but his bravery, and of all that he had given up on her account. And so, each admiring the other, they lived very happily, even though their physical surroundings were horribly rough and poor. Orion undertook to do the hunting for the caravan in return for food and lodging for himself and wife, and presently he

bartered some of the skins for cattle, and in this way came to own a few, like the men of the tribe.

They wandered with this tribe for several years, and three children were born to them, the eldest boy being Aldeb and the second child, Eros, a girl. Later on they joined another band of people of higher type, who were engaged in war with a neighbouring tribe. Orion offered his services, which were eagerly accepted, and when his side had been victorious he received a considerable share of the spoil, thus becoming comparatively rich again. Then he and his wife gave up their wandering life entirely, and settled among their new friends of the victorious tribe.

Meanwhile news of their flight together had reached Orion's family, who were furious, considering that he had disgraced their name and dragged their honour in the dust by intermarrying with their hereditary enemies. His father sent his brother, Scorpio, to search for him and to kill him, as he thought that only blood would wipe out the dishonour. Scorpio, after much labour, succeeded in reaching the pair, but finding them domiciled among a powerful and warlike tribe, hesitated to make any direct attack upon them. He thought it wiser to ally himself with a robber band whose depredations had long been an annoyance to the district. These bandits occupied a small rocky

valley among the hills, so well defended by nature as to be almost impregnable. It was surrounded by precipices perhaps two hundred feet in height ; a river fell in a cascade into one end of it, and the place where the river flowed out at the other was the only practicable entrance. The bandits had strengthened this by building a wall across it, leaving only a winding passage which was always guarded.

Scorpio disguised himself and, with two other bandits, watched for Orion until he saw him at some distance from the town, when they fell upon him. Being a well-trained fighter Orion succeeded in beating them off, killing one and wounding both the others, who, however, contrived to escape. Orion himself was wounded, but not very seriously. He regarded this as an ordinary attempt at highway robbery, and had no idea that his own brother was concerned in it. Scorpio was now more determined than ever to injure him, though afraid to meet him in fight, so he formed the project of kidnapping his son and heir, Aldeb, who by this time was a child of seven. He succeeded in this nefarious plot, and the grief of the father and mother at the boy's disappearance was indescribable.

Indeed the mother's anguish was such that Orion, who loved her so deeply, was almost maddened by it, and swore a great oath to recover

the child if he were alive. Looking around with great care for any clues as to what had happened, he found, on a sort of fork which happened to be hanging on the wall close to the doorway, some torn shreds of cloth, a thread or two of the clothes his boy had worn, and also a fragment of a particular kind of dark blue cloth, with a little burr sticking to it. The fork hung well above the height of the child's head, so the father deduced that when it caught his clothes he was being carried by someone. The blue cloth was quite strange to him, so he thought it must be from the garment of the kidnapper; the little burr led to a kind of plant which grew in only one spot in the district—a bit of swampy ground just outside the entrance to the bandit's valley. Orion quickly inferred where his child must be, and resolved to rescue him, for since the robbers did not kill him on the spot he thought it probable that the boy still lived. Everyone was afraid to meddle with the band of thieves, who had a great reputation for ferocity, but Orion spent a large portion of his wealth in bribing a number of men to join him in an attack on their stronghold.

He went alone to reconnoitre the place, and decided at once that nothing could be done with the guarded entrance, and that his party must somehow or other get down the cliffs. He constructed a

rope-ladder with wooden rungs, something new in that country, and resolved that a few daring spirits should descend by this means, while the rest kept the bandits employed. The bandits guarded only their doorway, being perfectly confident that their cliffs were unscalable. The top of the cliffs could be reached from the valley only by a detour of several hours, so Orion was able to put his men in position not far from their edge without attracting the attention of the bandits. Then with great labour they gathered together vast numbers of loose boulders. When all was ready Orion himself, with a small party of picked men, advanced to the spot which he had chosen for fixing the ladder, but he had barely succeeded in doing this before he was perceived by one of the bandits, who instantly gave the alarm. At once the robbers came rushing out of their huts, and began to shoot their arrows at the daring little party ; but at the same moment Orion developed *his* attack, for his men on both cliffs also shot clouds of arrows, while others rolled down rocks on the heads of the advancing robbers, and yet others threw down balls of wool which had been soaked in oil and lighted. Thus in a few minutes several of the huts were set on fire, and many of the bandits killed or wounded.

Meantime Orion had lowered his clumsy ladder, and was himself the first to trust to its very

precarious support. As soon as he reached the bottom he was able to fix the lower end, so the rest of his little band came down much more safely ; and meanwhile the attention of the robbers was so thoroughly engaged that only one of his party now protected the bottom of the ladder while more and more of his men came swiftly down it, the rest up above never ceasing their steady downpour of rocks and arrows. When about fifty of his men were in the valley he led them in a furious charge upon the remnant of the bandits, who were exterminated after some desperate fighting, as the remainder of Orion's troops came clambering down to help. Orion looked out eagerly for the blue garment, rushed madly upon its wearer, and killed him with his own hand, but was terribly shocked when he tore off the disguise and discovered it was his own brother whom he had slain. Several prisoners who had been held for ransom were found, and a number of women whom the robbers had at different times captured.

Among these Orion was overjoyed to find his little son alive and unhurt, though badly frightened. He carried him home to his wife in triumph, and the reunion was indeed a happy one, though clouded by the horror of the fratricide. Orion was all but overwhelmed by the thought of what he had done, but his wife comforted him, pointing out that he could not

be held responsible, as he was entirely ignorant of the identity of his enemy. Nevertheless he brooded over it, all the more as he found himself avoided by the neighbours when the story become generally known. Finally, the whole family decided to leave that part of the country, and Orion directed their course towards his old home, with some half-formed intention of giving himself up to his father as a kind of atonement. Before he arrived, however, he heard that his father had been recently slain by the opposite parties in the old feud—indeed that his family had been all but exterminated, and that he was now the only surviving male. He therefore took possession of the property, and his wife persuaded him that it was best to say nothing of the fratricide which of course was unknown there. For his wife's sake he took no further action in the matter of the feud, though many people blamed him for leaving his father's death unavenged.

The remainder of his life passed comparatively quietly, and he died at the age of fifty-eight, his wife following him a few years later. This life undoubtedly showed considerable improvement upon the previous one, not only in the greater determination exhibited, but also in the absence of greed and avarice. It will be noted, however, that to effect this change it needed the presence with Orion of two of those egos who have always been helpers

and influences for good, so that the victory was not won entirely alone. Few of his other old friends were with him this time. Sirius was indeed his great-grandmother, but had died before he was born. Sirius had married Bella; and two at least of their children played a prominent part in the history of their tribe, for their eldest son Deneb was a great military and political leader, while their second son Lyra devoted himself to philosophy and religion, and became a celebrated teacher and prophet. Orion had altogether five children—three during the wandering, and two later on.

XI

CANADA

The scene of this life lies in what is now Canada, north of Lake Superior, and its date is 14,507 B. C. The great lakes at that time were somewhat different in outline, and the climate was colder. Orion's father, Ursa, belonged to a race something like the Esquimaux, who were small of stature, sturdy and dark. The people lived in houses that had very thick walls, made of double rows of logs. The tribe migrated in each year for hunting purposes, moving south for the winter, and north for the summer, and they often erected temporary snow-huts on their journeys.

Orion's mother, Sirius, was the daughter of the chief. His father, Ursa, was a selfish and scheming man, who was often unkind to his mother. Orion on the whole was afraid of him, though the father was good-natured to the child, at such times as he thought of it. When Orion was seven years old, we observe that he loved his mother and helped her in looking after the babies, of whom there were six younger than himself, two of them being twins.

About this time his father fell in love with another woman, Gamma, and brought her home in place of the mother, whom he drove away. Gamma pretended to take care of the children at first, but did not really like them, and soon began to neglect them, treating them unkindly. Orion soon grew to hate her. There was often not enough food for the entire family, and hunger made him grow selfish, and even drove him to steal. He became, in fact, rather a little savage—short but strong for his age, with keen black eyes. His inward craving for love was not understood now that his mother was gone. He was thus always thrown back upon himself, and he grew hard and was often cruel, not from love of cruelty, but because he was self-centred ; he did not even *think* of others.

After a few years, the mother reappeared, and begged to be allowed to see her children sometimes, but the new wife compelled the father to refuse.

Orion was hardy and strong ; he hated the new wife, despised all women, and had even lost his love for his own mother. He went out hunting sometimes with his father, but quarrelled even with him. When he was sixteen years old his father was badly mauled by a bear ; and the new wife, seeing at once that Ursa would never be a strong hunter again, abandoned him, and taking her jewels and some weapons ran off with a younger man.

Orion would not stay at home to nurse his wounded father, who lay in a very bad condition for weeks. His first wife Sirius heard of his state, and returned and nursed him back to health. Orion by this time had formed his own habits ; he was suspicious of his mother, as of all women ; he was intractable and wayward, and would not respond to her anxious love, or help her with the younger children. Everything must give way to his slightest whim, or he was impatient, rough and angry. Already he was beyond control, often remaining away from home for days together. In pursuance of his uncontrolled passions he seduced Sigma, the daughter of a neighbour, a girl who was about his own age. This was discovered, and caused a great disturbance, for under these circumstances the girl was no longer a desirable person, and could not be given in marriage to anyone else. A tribal council was held, which decreed that, young as Orion was, he must marry

Sigma, and take her to his father's house. This made one more mouth to feed, where already there was not enough to go round. The father was angered, but the mother tried to make the best of it. Orion was carelessly kind to the girl-wife, when he happened to think about her, but soon regarded her as a burden thrust unjustly upon him, and a clog to his ambitious schemes.

The household ran along scantily in a comfortless fashion for some years. Orion had some children for whom he really cared, but they most unfortunately died, and the sorrow hardened him still more. Eventually he went off to another tribe, at the age of twenty-four. There he soon made a reputation as a good hunter, and a keen trader in skins and furs. He married for policy's sake Nu, the daughter of an important man, and with her obtained a good dowry. Orion did not specially love her, but he had two little sons by her whom he loved very dearly, one of whom was Theseus. When these sons were seven and five years old respectively, their mother died, and he had no one to look after his children. Just at this time, in the course of his wanderings, he came across his old tribe again, learned that his father was dead, and that his mother Sirius and his own first wife Sigma were living together in very poor circumstances. They welcomed the wanderer and offered to take care of

his children. He accepted their offer and returned to his own tribe with his little sons ; and because of his mother's love for these sons of his, he grew to love her again, as he did when he was a little child. Sirius had always yearned over him, so she was very happy at recovering him and his love. Broken down by hardships, she died when he was thirty-four ; but the household still went on, for Orion had resumed his original wife, and they understood one another better now. She looked well after his sons, and soon had some of her own. Orion had grown less selfish, though he was still impulsive ; he now settled down to some twenty years of fairly ordinary family life, dying at the age of fifty-six.

This life was evidently largely a test to see whether under unfavourable circumstances and with a difficult body, the ego could still contrive to impress on the personality the love and unselfishness of the previous life. In many ways he was unsuccessful, so in the next incarnation an experiment was made with a change of sex.

XII

POSEIDONIS

Again Orion returns to Poseidonis in the year 13,671 B.C., as the daughter of Alastor, who was

then the King of one of the Tlavatli races. She was an exceedingly beautiful child, and captivated all who saw her. The parentage, however, was not a favourable one, for Alastor was stern, severe and stupid, and did not understand his children ; and her mother, Eta, though soft and yielding, was unwise and frequently untruthful.

As has already been said in the thirty-first life of Alcyone, Orion was much influenced by Ursa, a brother a year older than herself, who tyrannized over her and made her "fetch and carry" for him all through their childhood ; but she admired and loved him, and therefore she rather liked it. She was herself a wild and impetuous little creature, rebelling against all authority, but he was much more so ; and though she would not listen to anyone else, she obeyed him with touching fidelity. As they grew older his relations with her were not purely fraternal, and when she was sixteen this was discovered, and there was a great scandal. The pig-headed old King seemed entirely without tact and sympathy, and had not even the sense to arrange the matter quietly within the bosom of the family, as he might easily have done ; he wanted to make a great show of impartiality, so he made the whole affair public, and ordered the execution of his daughter and the banishment of his son. The son, though a selfish person, did not intend to allow his

sister to be put to death, or his own will to be crossed ; he bribed the jailers, contrived his sister's escape from the prison, and they fled together, hiding themselves in the forests on the borders of the country. Of course there was a great hue and cry after them, but they managed to elude pursuit, and diverted it into another direction by leading people to suppose that they had absconded by sea.

Ursa built a log cabin, and they lived quite an idyllic life all alone in the woods, very happy on the whole, though with occasional quarrels. Orion sometimes missed the adulation to which she had been accustomed at the court of her father, but love and the delights of freedom satisfied her fairly well, at any rate in the first intoxication of them. Soon her first child Sirius was born, a fine strong boy, and at once this new sensation of motherhood dominated her life to the exclusion of all other thoughts. The father was also interested in the child, though less keenly so. There was a custom in the country that the eldest son of the King should always have the symbol of a snake tattooed in red around his waist, but this was reserved for those who were in the direct line of succession to the throne. Orion's husband naturally had this symbol, and he himself impressed the same mark upon his infant son, as a sign that he was the heir to the kingdom, even

though born unnoticed in the depths of the forest, far away from the pomp of the court.

A year later a little girl, Vega, was born, and the mother was happier than ever. She and her two babies made a very pretty picture as she played with them and bathed them in the stream which flowed past their hut. She was so absorbed in them that she but rarely regretted the excitement of the court life which she had abandoned; but she often made plans for the future as to the way in which her boy was to come into his birthright and be recognized as the heir to the throne. Her brother, now that the novelty of the forest life was passing, began to tire of her, and to think that he had bought her love at too great a cost. Quarrels grew more frequent, and he often revolved in his mind plans for resuming his position as prince. At length he deserted his wife and made his way round to a port, at which he pretended to have arrived by sea. He thus returned to the capital and announced himself to his father, the King, who welcomed and forgave him. He denied all knowledge of the whereabouts of his sister, and she was commonly supposed to have perished in attempting to escape from prison. The King soon arranged a marriage for his son, and the latter consented, although he did not entirely forget the lovely sister whom he had deserted in the forest, and whom he would have very much

preferred to his new common-place wife, if he could have had her without sacrificing his position.

Meantime Orion was naturally in a condition of great indignation and misery. As to the merely material side of life she had little difficulty, for she could gather wild fruits, dig for roots and manage the traps in which her brother had been accustomed to snare the smaller creatures of the forest. She had no clothing for herself or her children except such as she could make of plaited palm-leaves and from the dried skins of the small animals and birds; but as the climate was warm this did well enough. Knowing the obstinacy of her father, she was well aware that during his lifetime she could never show herself at court, and was afraid that even if she should try to live among the peasants in a remote part of the kingdom, she might be detected and sent back to execution. At the same time she was fully determined that somehow or other her boy should have his rights and eventually inherit the kingdom. She spent many days in thinking over the matter in all its aspects, and finally decided that at any rate until the children were much older she could do no better than stay where she was. She hoped also that her brother might either relent and return to her, or make some arrangement by which she could be received and acknowledged, at least after the old King's death.

Here in the forest she remained for years, the children growing up healthy and happy, looking like little Greek statues in their beauty and gracefulness. It presently occurred to her that if her plans that her children should one day take their rightful place in the world were to come to anything, it was absolutely necessary that they should be to some extent accustomed to intercourse with their fellowmen. So she put on what remained of the garments in which she had originally left home, and made her way to a village at a considerable distance. She stayed there for a few days, playing the part of a poor woman on a journey, and then returned to her sylvan hut. She repeated this experiment at intervals during the next few years, always avoiding suspicion as far as possible, and never going twice to the same village. In this way she procured by the sale of furs, some old cloth out of which she made garments for the children, although they assumed them only when they visited the outer world. A very strong affection existed between mother and son, and also between the brother and sister. The mother dearly loved Vega also, but the son seemed to occupy the very centre of her heart, and he in turn idolized her. Living so much alone together amid such favourable surroundings, they all became keenly sympathetic, and were often able to understand one another without speaking, and to send telepathic messages to one another at a distance.

As the young man grew up his mother told him the story of his royal birth, and they planned together that they would reappear in the capital and claim recognition when the old King died. Before that happened, however, Orion fell ill and died. When on her death-bed she made her son solemnly promise that he would go to his father and announce himself as the heir to the throne. The young people mourned deeply the departure of their mother. They buried her body under the floor of the hut and then abandoned it forever, as they could not bear to live where every tree and stone reminded them perpetually of their loss. They made their way gradually to the capital, the young man taking the most affectionate care of his sister.¹ He found some employment there, and intended to bide his time until the old King had died, but the tattooed snake round his waist betrayed him. After various dramatic scenes he obtained recognition as the heir, and in due course succeeded to the throne. His sister Vega married Capella, one of the great lords of the country, and life on the whole went well with her. For Orion this incarnation showed marked improvement; great power of love was manifested, and a heavy trial was well borne, the love triumphing over ambition and desire for ease and display.

¹ See "The Lives of Alcyone" Life XXXI.

XIII

PERU

Orion took part this time in a famous gathering of our group of egos, being born in 12,090 B.C. in a family belonging to the governing class in Peru. She was red-bronze in colour, with fine dark eyes, and grew up to be very beautiful and a picture of graceful health. Her father, Vesta, was a capable man, full of enthusiasm for his work and of keen intuition as to what should be done and, in broad outline, the best way of doing it. The mother, Mira who co-operated in such work, as was usual among the governing classes, had more head for detail. She had less of the grand sweeping intuition, but more of practical sense. Though always busily occupied, they looked after their children thoroughly well, and made them very happy. All children were regarded in ancient Peru as the children of the State, and their education was in the hands, not of the parents, but of the Priests of the Sun. That system of education was far more practical than ours of the present day, the first object being to turn out good, useful and capable citizens who thoroughly understood everything that they would be likely to have to do in ordinary every-day life.

Orion had an elder brother, Bella, who was a capable and practical boy ; he seemed to do a good

deal of the work of looking after his two younger sisters, Orion and Achilles, inventing games for them and working them very hard in those games. They moved quite in the highest society, for Siwa, the son of the Inca, Mars, was often to be seen among their playmates. The family had many ramifications, and the children were well supplied with cousins whom they constantly met—Sirius, Hector, Demeter, Aldeb and Helios being among them. Boys and girls studied and worked and played together, much more than at the present day. Little Orion seemed to know the value of her beauty, and put on airs among the crowd of her juvenile suitors. Sirius, five years older than she was, was greatly devoted to the small flirt, who sometimes seemed to have loved him dearly and was sometimes distinctly coquettish and took queer fits of contrariness. Sirius was painfully shy, and was at his best only when alone with her.

Once when she was about ten years old he had an opportunity of doing her a service which even when she grew up she never forgot. When they were rambling together along the margin of a river, an alligator suddenly rose from the water and made a rush for the child. She sprang back with a shriek, but lost her footing, and could not possibly have escaped the alligator but for the sudden leap of Sirius. Fortunately he had in his hand a heavy

hedge-stake which he had sharpened laboriously at both ends, in order to make holes in the sand for her, and just as the great jaws were about to close upon the girl, he reached there in time to thrust his arm between them, so that the tremendous force of the bite drove the points of the stake (which he was holding perpendicularly) firmly into the beast's jaws, and held the mouth open. Sirius was able to withdraw his arm, without any injury beyond a few gashes, and to drag the frightened girl up the bank into safety. Orion was very brave about it, and tore strips from her frock to bind up the boy's wounds. The children were unable to recover the stake, which they much regretted, as wood was rare in that country.

A curious point was that under certain conditions these two were able to have visions in common. When Orion was a little girl of seven or eight years, and Sirius was twelve, they were one day sitting hand in hand near the river, when suddenly a sort of dream came over them in which they both lost sight of their surroundings and found themselves on the banks of a much smaller river amid magnificent forest-scenery, such as they had not seen in Peru and could therefore hardly have imagined. Here they were living quite a different life—in fact, the life of the last incarnation, though of course they did not know that. This vision seemed to them to last

a long time, though in reality it occupied only a few minutes. They compared notes on awakening, and discovered that even to the minutest detail they had both seen the same thing. Experimenting another day, they found that at almost any time when they could sit quiet, alone and hand in hand, they could pass into this dream-state and live through day after day of that strange sylvan life. They took great delight in this and practised it at frequent intervals. When the boy grew older he saw more dimly, and gradually the power faded away from them both, though she retained it much longer than he. The possession of this curious secret made a very strong bond between them.

Aldeb was nearer her own age and was also a great favourite. Orion was clever at music, and at times very fond of it, and was taught to play some of the curious musical instruments of the period—a kind of harmonium of great power, in which the notes were pillars or cylinders of shining metal, the ends of which were pressed like the keys of a typewriter, thus setting in vibration tongues of metal. She played two kinds of lyre (one of seven and one of fourteen wires), which were held in the lap, and also a large hanging harp of wide range. She could likewise play the three-stringed lyre which was carried in processions and was used very effectively along with the golden trumpets of the Sun. She

was taught to paint a little, but did not seem to be specially interested in that work. Life was always gay and happy; the climate was splendid and the children lived, learned, played and even slept practically always in the open air.

The parents were on most friendly terms with Mercury, Uranus and Selene, and there was constant intercourse between the families. Mercury, in particular, often noticed Orion, took her on his knee and told her stories and taught her maxims connected with the worship of Ynty, the Spirit of the Sun. There was also a kind aunt, Rigel, whom Orion loved deeply.

The marriage customs were rather peculiar, for all weddings took place once a year only, on one stated day. Then the Governor summoned before him all those who during the past twelve months had reached a marriageable age, and those who wished chose their partners, or had them arranged for them by their parents. When this was all settled, one big ceremony united them and there were no more weddings until the same day next year. One curious result of this remarkable arrangement was that astrologically quite a large proportion of the births in the country took place under the same sign.

Sirius and Orion certainly loved one another. Sirius felt protectively towards Orion, yet had also

a reverential awe of her, as the channel through which, as he thought, their wonderful double dreams came, and he was too shy and self-distrustful to venture to suggest : : . Still, if he had been at hand when Orion reached the proper age, there is little doubt that somehow they would have arrived at an understanding ; but Sirius was sent away at the age of twenty-one to take charge of a distant district ; and though, in his case, absence made the heart grow fonder, the same effect does not appear to have been produced upon the young lady. When she reached the required age, Aldeb pressed his suit very strongly and, as the parents on both sides favoured the match, Orion accepted him. She was undoubtedly just as happy in every way as she could have been with Sirius, but he never quite recovered from the disappointment, though he strove loyally to acquiesce in her decision.

A marriage was arranged for him some years later with Spica, and he did his best to fulfil his duties faithfully, but his first love always maintained a supreme place in his heart. Of course the families were entirely friendly, and Sirius kept his feelings locked up in his own breast. Orion's husband was not engaged directly in carrying on the machinery of government, but assisted in a kind of scientific investigation department. The enquiries did not seem to be pursued with an abstract idea of acquiring

knowledge of nature, but always for some immediate practical end—the discovery of some new and superior fertilizer for the land, some better method of hardening or annealing metals, some novel and beautiful dye or some specially efficient medicine or ointment. The husband had a close friendship with two clever fellow-students, one of whom was Aries, and they devoted a great deal of time to experiments of all sorts. Aldeb invented a method of making some particularly concentrated type of artificial fuel which was a great success, and also discovered that a brilliant light could be obtained by burning a gas which was given off in the process—the earliest instance we have seen of the use of a gas as an illuminant.

In the course of these researches he contrived to blow himself up rather badly, and was confined to his bed for a long time, but Aries was something of a doctor and managed to bring him through, so that he pluckily resumed his studies and eventually mastered the difficulties. Later on he had as assistant a particularly keen and daring young student, Taurus, to whom he became much attached. Castor and Pollux were also young students much interested in these matters, though neither of them seemed definitely to take up science as his line of life. Vega when young was the bosom friend of one of Orion's sons, and was therefore much at the house.

Orion had a long and useful life—very fully occupied, as were all those of the higher classes in Peru—not exempt from the usual joys and sorrows, but on the whole quite fairly happy. One or two prominent incidents may be mentioned. Orion was solemnly presented to Mars, the Inca, by Siwa his son, and the ceremony produced a lasting impression upon her, for the Inca was regarded with great awe as well as great affection, as the living representative of the power of the Sun-Spirit. He was a man of dignified presence and great force of character, indomitable in will and irresistible in strength, yet full of benignity. The young *debutante* was most powerfully affected, and fell on her face before the majesty of his mien, which was *not* part of the programme of the ceremony; but the Inca himself raised her from the ground and spoke kindly and reassuringly to her.

Once she undertook a long journey to the outlying districts of the empire with her husband, who was sent to examine and report upon some new discoveries of mineral wealth there. They were absent more than a year, during which time she left her children in the care of her younger sister, Achilles, who in the meantime had married Demeter, a most charming and able young man. Orion suffered much over the loss of her eldest son Theseus, who became a soldier and was killed when in command

of an expedition against some of the barbarian tribes. Herakles was a close friend of one of her daughters, and was much admired and loved by the family, and also by that of Sirius, who himself was specially charmed by her.

Most people under Peruvian conditions lived to old age, and Orion was already seventy-seven when she was called to the death-bed of Sirius. There was a touching farewell between these two who for so long had loved one another so dearly, and once more, in that final hour, as she sat beside his bed and clasped his hand, the mystic vision of their childhood came back to them. They saw once more that strange yet familiar forest with its lonely, yet delightful life, and after that something that had never come to them before—a glimpse of a much earlier scene when they two had stood together before a venerated teacher and vowed to devote their lives to helping one another in the reparation of a great wrong. She herself passed away peacefully eight years later, and just as she was leaving the body she saw Sirius waiting for her—not as the old man of whom she had recently taken leave, but in the form of the boy whom long ago she had loved so well.

Considerable progress was made in this life, as there was a great advance in patience, gentleness and the capability of affection.

XIV

CHINA

Orion appeared this time in 9686 B.C. as a podgy little brown baby in Middle China. Her father was some sort of mandarin or governor of a town; he was much respected and indeed rather feared by his fellow-townsmen. The mother was somewhat subdued—an anxious, earnest soul—but looked well and even fussily after the child. They seem at this period to have made a great point of education in this country; it began in babyhood, and there appeared to be no limit but that of physical endurance to the amount that was crammed into the unfortunate infants. They taught the poor little Orion to recite verbose and wearisome poems which were absolutely meaningless to her, but she gained compensation by reading the most impossible fairy tales, in which she took great delight. The work imposed would have crushed an European child of that tender age, but this moon-faced atom survived and even thrived upon it.

There seemed to be very little play, but certain physical exercises, were prescribed. The father was carelessly affectionate, the mother rather anxiously so, and the child returned the feeling in rather a tepid sort of way, which was apparently all that

propriety permitted. The solemn-looking mite was really capable of a much more vivid love and, for want of an outlet for it, had always a hollow unsatisfied feeling that her life was somehow incomplete. Soon the outlet was found. She made friends with a . . . child, Theseus, who was two years older than herself. Her love and admiration for this little friend soon blossomed out into positive adoration, so that she stole across secretly in the night, to sleep at the door of the girl she loved. This friendship seems the most important factor in that short life, for at the early age of thirteen Orion fell into the river and was drowned—nothing so practical as swimming having been included among her manifold accomplishments.

XV

POSEIDONIS

The island of Poseidonis was again chosen as the birth-place for Orion, who was born in 9603 B.C. in the hill country in the north, among the white race from which the Aryans had been segregated. Sirius had been born fifteen years earlier in another valley not a hundred miles away, but they knew nothing of one another until many years later. Orion's father Betel had a large estate, and lived upon

it in the old patriarchal style, with many retainers and vast herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. She was a handsome child, very active and healthy, and learned, when very young, to be a daring rider. The father idolized the child, and the mother Sagit gave way more than was wise to the imperious little will. All the servants vied with one another in trying to find pleasures for her, gratifying all her whims and fancies.

Naturally she became vain and wilful, resisting any sort of control and insisting upon having her own way, even in the most unimportant details. If anyone told her to do anything, she at once wanted to do exactly the opposite, even though her reason showed her that the request was reasonable. Her little schemes rarely failed, so she was generally good-tempered and kindly disposed, but when crossed she was sulky and even passionate at times. Altogether she was certainly self-centred and inconsiderate, although capable of strong affection. Various young men fell in love with her, and it is to be feared that she distinctly enjoyed playing them off one against the other. Before she was sixteen, her coquetries had already led to a fight between two aspirants for her favour, Hebe and Stella, in which the latter was killed. Many blamed her in the matter, and she was indignant that it should be so. However, about this time she herself began to fall

in love with Atlas, who was an eligible young man, and probably her character would have been greatly improved thereby. But just at this crisis the valleys were invaded by the Toltec armies.

These white races of the north always maintained a good deal of independence, even though nominally subject to the Toltec emperor. But perpetual quarrels arose as to the amount of tribute to be paid and the manner of its collection, and occasional Toltec expeditions were the result. The country was so ' ' and difficult to traverse that it was never permanently occupied by the armies, but descents were made at intervals upon individual estates, the people were killed and cattle were seized. Such a descent was made upon the ranch of Orion's father; he, the lover and many others were killed, and all the younger women were captured and carried down to the city as slaves. A month previously the same expedition had raided the valley where Sirius lived, and she had been carried off in exactly the same way. She had been assigned to the harem of Eta, a rich Toltec, and plunged into a life of servitude of the most intolerable character. She suffered much, but tried to bear it philosophically, hoping always for some amelioration of her condition.

It happened that Orion was given over to the same man, or bought by him, so she and Sirius met

for the first time in this life. Orion was filled with indignation, and was in a condition of passionate protest against all the outrages offered her. The brutal passions of the master and his boon companions, and the venomous spite of the elder and more neglected wives (among whom were Daphne and Gamma), made the life a very real hell ; and the petted and idolized girl, whose every wish had been law, seemed almost unable to endure the change. Her pride and caprice were quickly crushed out of her, and she was compelled to instant obedience to the most abominable demands, but the passionate sense of outrage never left her for a moment, and by the end of a week she was half-insane with the horror of it all—in fact, had already made two attempts at suicide. •

Then she met Sirius, and the fact that they were country-women at once drew them together. Sirius had suffered in the same way, but being older and less delicate, and seeing that escape seemed utterly impossible, was trying to make the best of a very bad situation, though watching with unceasing vigilance for any opportunity that might present itself. She was filled with pity for poor Orion, so young and beautiful, and so unused to hardships of any kind. She tried hard to protect her and make her lot more bearable, often contriving to offer herself as a substitute for her, so as to save her some at least

of the unnecessary horrors of their life. Orion clung to her country-woman in return with an eager gratitude and devotion that was beautiful to see—a welling up of unselfish affection such as her pampered life on the estate had never evoked. Sirius spared no efforts to shield her, but even with all that she could do, it became increasingly evident as the weeks rolled on that Orion could not bear the strain, and would presently sink under it. The free and joyous child of the mountains was becoming a shrinking and terrified creature who started at a shadow and burst into tears at a sudden sound.

The penalty of an unsuccessful attempt to escape would be death by unspeakable tortures, and the effort seemed so hopeless that Sirius had never seriously contemplated the idea; but compassion and love for Orion made her willing now to risk even these awful consequences in the hope of saving her from the insanity or death which seemed imminent. They spent much time in consultation over the problem as to how escape could be attempted, and Sirius at last conceived a plan, which, though desperate enough, seemed not quite absolutely impossible. To get out of the house at all was their first great difficulty, but even if that could be achieved, their white skins would betray them as slaves, and they could not walk a hundred yards without the certainty of exposure and capture. Also it was

equally certain that young and unprotected women could not pass unscathed through a single street of that city at that time. Obviously, therefore, disguise was necessary, and there seemed no means of procuring it.

However, Sirius constrained herself now to take part in conversation with the other women (which hitherto she had never done), and thus was sometimes in their rooms. In this way she was able to obtain possession of some complexion paint which, being intended for a Toltec woman, gave the darker tint which would make the fugitives resemble the conquering race. Then came the question of clothes, and this baffled them for some time, till one day Sirius saw an opportunity to purloin a suit which belonged to one of the male visitors. Hurriedly she applied the paint to her face, hands and arms, and also carefully painted Orion. She put on the male garments, dressed Orion in the clothes of a Toltec woman, and made her veil herself thoroughly. Then she took her boldly by the hand and made her way into the more public part of the house, contriving skilfully to elude the servants and the older women. In the public apartment they mingled with the guests, and then quite naturally walked out of the house by the front entrance amidst bowing servants. This happy audacity carried them safely into the street, and, as they wore the appearance of

a Toltec husband and wife, no one interfered with them. Orion had been so broken down by her sufferings that she trembled violently, and was so nervous that she walked with difficulty. Sirius was equally frightened, but tried not to show it.

Of course, their first object was to put a considerable distance between them and the house in which they had so long been confined. As they knew nothing of the city, they just pushed on in the direction which they had taken by hazard when they turned out of the gate. They were entirely without money, but Sirius had some trifling jewels. She had been wearing these when captured near her northern home; they had been taken from her by one of the older women, but she thought it no harm to steal them back again before she started. When she saw a jeweller's shop, she swaggered in as nearly in the lordly Toltec manner as she could, and tried to assume a deep and reasonably manly voice. She offered a necklace for sale, and after a little bargaining for appearance's sake she accepted the jeweller's valuation, though she knew that the necklace was really worth far more than he offered. Small as the amount was, it gave them a little ready cash, and they accordingly felt safer.

After a few miles, Orion seemed ready to fall with fatigue; but Sirius, though sympathetic, felt that they *must* get away from the city before they stopped

to rest, as the spectacle of people, dressed as they were, sitting down to rest in the street would be sure to attract undesirable attention. Somehow or other they managed to reach the suburbs, and then turned into a tavern, where Sirius ordered food, and in this way they were able to rest for a couple of hours. It was night before they were entirely free from the city, and Orion was quite worn out. They consulted as to the advisability of going to a hotel, but decided that it was hardly safe, so they spent the night in a convenient barn. When further away from the capital they tried an inn for one night, but resolved not to risk it again. The people were quite polite and did not appear suspicious, but were greatly surprised to see persons of rank travelling on foot, without servants or luggage.

As the days went on, their money began to run short; and they were in the difficulty that Sirius did not know how to do any ordinary work which could earn more, nor could she apply for any work while wearing the dress of a city gentleman. At last, seeing an inferior kind of clothing-shop in the town through which they were passing, it occurred to Sirius to barter their somewhat fashionable garments for the ordinary dress of the respectable working-people of the country, representing that these clothes were required for a frolic in which they were engaged. This saved them trouble in

certain ways, but on the other hand there was the objection that they did not look or walk like working people. Another source of trouble was that they were no longer surrounded with the awed respect accorded to the higher classes, and so were sometimes liable to rough words, and even to insult.

On one occasion a person dressed like a gentleman caught a glimpse of Orion's pretty face, and offered some impertinence. Sirius repulsed him vigorously, and for the time he seemed to abandon them; but he secretly followed them and, during the following night, reappeared and offered violence to Orion. Sirius, though strong for a woman, could not struggle with him as a man could have done, and was at last compelled to snatch his dagger from its sheath and stab him with it. Fearing arrest for this, they started on at once and walked all night. When day came they concealed themselves; indeed, they did not travel openly again until they were quite away from that district.

Their progress was necessarily slow, and they were several months upon their journey. They were often put to serious shifts to obtain food, the difficulty being that so few lines of casual work were open to them. Orion grew rapidly stronger with the regular exercise and open-air life, and became more like her old self. She was in reality but a girl of seventeen, though those few weeks of hell in

the city had for the time made her look twice that age. Though she recovered to some extent her youth and elasticity, she never entirely lost the nervousness and timidity which those weeks had developed in her. They were very thankful when at last they gained the hills, and were able to wash off the horrible paint which it had cost them such ceaseless trouble to renew. Even though they were once more among their own race, that part of the country was directly under the Toltec government, and therefore the law would unquestionably have handed them back to their "master" in the capital.

To live in safety they must adopt one of two alternatives; either they must make their way to that part of the mountains which was still independent, or they must seek refuge in a nunnery. This latter was possible because in the treaty which established the Toltec power in this country there had been a special clause guaranteeing perfect religious liberty and non-interference with any of the existing religious establishments. Orion was so overpowered by horror at the mere thought of being carried back, and so haunted night and day by a nervous dread of recognition, even where it seemed most improbable, that when they reached one of the great conventual establishments of their own race, Sirius decided that the long strain of their flight should end there for the present, so she demanded an

interview with the lady abbess, Helios, revealed to her her sex and told the whole story. The abbess was full of sympathy, and assured the two fugitives that they were heartily welcome either to temporary asylum or permanent residence, and that even if by some improbable chance their identity should ever become known, they would still be perfectly safe. Sirius, hearing that, broke down at last and had a long illness, during which Orion attended upon her most devotedly. The two comrades in danger had become fast friends, and were not happy unless together.

It took them some years of peaceful life within the convent walls to recover from the effects of that long nightmare of danger and hardship; but during this time they became deeply interested in the religious life which surrounded them. The abbess had wisely recommended them to try the healing influence of prayer and meditation, but for fully two years they could do little in this way, for whenever they allowed themselves to think quietly for a few minutes the memory of the horrors of the city rushed upon them and overpowered their minds like an obsession, so that they were compelled to turn to active work for a distraction. This condition of nervous prostration persisted much longer with Orion than with Sirius, and when the thought of fear came upon the former with overwhelming

force, the only thing that would soothe her was to rush at once in search of Sirius and cling to her half hysterically. These fits of terror became rarer as time passed, and after five years Orion was entirely free from them, though general nervousness and extreme sensitiveness still remained.

The two friends at first had the idea of moving on, when fully recovered, into some of the states which still retained complete independence, but they finally resolved to stay where they were. They both knew that their ancestral homes had been destroyed and all their friends and relations killed, and there was therefore not sufficient inducement to resign the peace and security of the convent for the dangers and uncertainties of life outside. This convent was a vast establishment—quite a town in itself—and many branches of activity were carried on within it. There were nuns who spent their lives almost entirely in spiritual exercises of various kinds, but there were also many who gave their time to study, others who made garments or prepared food for the poor, and others who devoted themselves to the service of the large and excellently managed hospital which was attached to the establishment.

A monastery of equal size existed side by side with this convent, and the two together made a kind of religious town, which stood at some little distance

from the town devoted to business and ordinary residence. This religious town was within a huge rambling old wall of its own, which no one ever passed uninvited, as great respect was paid to the monks and nuns. Quite a large tract of country was included within this wall, and there were many beautiful gardens of which the monks took the most loving care. There were, of course, some black sheep in this flock, but on the whole, the life was very happy and useful—quite the brightest spot that we have yet seen in these last days of the decadent Atlantean Race. Some of our *dramatis personae* have been recognized, both in the abbey and among the townspeople.

Among the Toltecs generally magic was at this time very extensively practised, and almost always for the most selfish purposes, and these studies had their representatives among the monks of this northern race. One of these monks, Scorpio, observed in Orion the characteristics of a good subject for hypnotism, and invited her to take up the subject, and experiment with him. She would go nowhere and do nothing without Sirius, and Sirius was somewhat suspicious of this monk. However, the latter persuaded the two women to attend one of his magical séances, and there he produced phenomena which impressed them both profoundly.

In a darkened room amidst gruesome surroundings was set a huge brazier of incense, and as thick stupefying clouds arose from this, a strange but imposing figure appeared floating amidst them, and in a hollow voice ordered Orion to submit herself to the hypnotism of the monk. Both the women were much affected and rather frightened, though neither of them liked the general influence which they felt, and Sirius's suspicions were strengthened, though she could not tell why. After this, Orion was mesmerized several times by Scorpio, Sirius always being present, as Orion would never go alone, although importuned by the monk to do so. She showed considerable clairvoyant power, and through her Scorpio was able to obtain a great deal of information about the private affairs of people in the neighbouring city, which he no doubt employed either to impress them with his supernatural powers or to extract money from them. The monk was gradually gaining great influence over Orion, which she somewhat dreaded, while Sirius continued vaguely suspicious and instinctively disliked the whole thing.

Presently the monk began to throw Orion into a trance from a distance, appointing a time when she should sit quiet in her own room, and then acting upon her from his cell, just as though he were physically present. Later he was able to do this

when he chose, *without* arranging a particular time beforehand. Orion submitted to this domination, but Sirius found it intolerable—really thinking it a bad thing for Orion, but also moved by a sort of half-jealousy of an influence that seemed to take her friend temporarily away from her.

In order to overawe this rising spirit of protest another magical séance was arranged, and once more the terrifying figure appeared amidst clouds of smoke. Orion trembled, but Sirius, though inwardly quaking, nevertheless watched the proceedings closely. She soon noticed certain curious facts, especially that when the apparition spoke its lips did not move, and that at those moments the monk was never looking at it, as would have seemed natural, but always had his face pressed against the wall as though in fear. The voice of the apparition also had a certain resemblance to that of Scorpio; so instead of remaining within the magic circle which had been marked out for them as the only place of safety, Sirius prowled about a little when opportunity offered. Presently she discovered that when she placed her hand in a particular place, part of the apparition disappeared. Following up this clue, she found a carefully masked recess in the wall, in which was an ingenious arrangement of a concave mirror, with an image in front of it which was the exact

counterpart of the apparition. A very strong light was focussed upon this image, and the concave mirror threw a vivid, solid-looking reproduction of it upon the incense smoke. Sirius had already observed that whenever the column of smoke failed for a moment, the image was no longer there.

She said nothing while they were still in the power of the monk but the next day she made some excuse to enter Scorpio's room when he was absent. Examining the part of the wall against which he had pressed his face, she found a hole there. Greatly daring, she pressed her lips to the wall and spoke into it, and was startled to hear a hollow voice from the other end of the room repeating her words. Trying this again and again, she became satisfied that it was her own voice that she heard, and that it was somehow conveyed through the wall to the spot from which it appeared to issue. Searching carefully, she found, concealed among some carving, the hole through which it came, and when she spoke into that hole, the voice appeared to come from the other place, so that she now knew exactly how the illusion was produced.

She then went home and explained the entire fraud to Orion, who was much horrified and yet also relieved, and at once promised to have nothing more to do with the dishonest monk. Scorpio had real mesmeric power, and used his reprehensible

trick only to overawe his subjects and frighten them into submission to his experiments. The women did not wish to quarrel with him or make an enemy of him, so they steadfastly refused to continue the sittings, but declined to give any reason, beyond alleging that a dream had forbidden them. The monk tried again and again to throw Orion into a trance from a distance, but Sirius exhorted her to resist, and worked with frenzied efforts to keep her awake when she was threatened.

This constantly renewed struggle was impairing Orion's health and bringing back the old extreme nervousness, so Sirius determined that violent measures were necessary, as she had repeatedly but unavailingly begged Scorpio to desist. She therefore obtained an interview with the abbess and revealed the whole story to her, begging that if any steps were taken her name might not appear in the matter, lest the monk in revenge should lie in wait to kill her. The abbess reassured her, and without mentioning any names sent an account of the apparatus to Siwa, the prior at the head of the monastery, who was a great friend of hers, simply asking him to have Scorpio's room searched to see whether this was true. The prior promptly investigated, found the concave mirror and the speaking-tube, confiscated the entire outfit, expelled the monk from the community, and obtained great

credit for his supernatural acuteness in detecting fraud. No one knew where Scorpio went, but from his distant retreat he still occasionally troubled Orion.

As the latter was encouraged to vigorous resistance, the efforts to control her gradually became fewer and fainter, but it was perhaps eighteen months before she was left entirely in peace. The women lived on to middle age as devoted friends, and their life, though quiet, was interesting and happy. Orion developed great skill as a player on the harp, and while playing used to pass into a kind of ecstasy in which she was entirely oblivious of earthly things—could not hear if addressed, or feel if touched, yet could play the most inspirational music, such as had never been heard in that country before. This power was first developed as an antidote to the mesmeric influence of the monk, for Sirius found that if, when Orion was almost yielding, she thrust the harp into her hands, she instinctively began to play, and the music strengthened her to throw off Scorpio's influence. If under such circumstances the ecstasy descended upon her she would appear transfigured, and would be absolutely free from the monk for many days. Sirius did not understand all this at the time, though she knew that it was good. Now, looking back, it is clear that one of the musical Devas had

been attracted to her, and was trying to uplift the people through her.

The sinking of Poseidonis was foretold by the priests of this northern race, and though of course many did not believe or pay attention, there were also very many who did. As the time approached the abbess called her great army of nuns together, and dramatically described to them what was coming. She stated that as money would no longer be required, all the great wealth of the convent was at the disposal of those who wished to leave the country, and all were left perfectly free to do what they chose. For herself, she said, she cared very little about life, and did not wish to begin it all over again in a new land, as she was too old, so she intended to stay and perish with her country, upholding the flag of her order to the last. Our two heroines, full of affection for her and fired by her enthusiasm, resolved to stay with her, as did a good many of the nuns. More than half, however, took advantage of her offer, and eleven large ships were fitted out to convey them to other lands. Others also returned to their homes in different parts of Poseidonis.

Though those who were left behind expected it, they were terrified when the first great shock came, and rushed together into the garden. There the abbess met them, gave them with splendid courage

a short and stirring address, and then asked Orion to play to them, to play as she had never played before. Orion was no longer the nervous shrinking woman, but was absolutely transfigured. The ecstasy descended upon her, and she swept the strings with a gesture like that of a queen who issues her orders. She played—or the Deva played through her—as no human being had ever played before. She called forth such a volume of sound as no harp had ever before given. She swayed that great crowd of women like one soul ; she held them entranced while the earth was rocking and the walls were crashing down all around them. So tremendous was the power of that divine music that when the sea rushed in and swept them all to destruction not a single cry was raised. All were so rapt from the lower world that the passage from this plane to the next was unnoticed ; and though the harp and harper were whelmed in the Atlantic, the same music still soared triumphant to far grander heights before the same audience on the astral plane.

XVI

ETRURIA

On this occasion we find ourselves amidst a busy manufacturing and mercantile race—the Etruscan—in the west of Italy, not far from where Grosseto now stands. Agriculture was in a thriving condition at this time, for the country was covered with vineyards and orchards. Muni, Orion's father, was a man of substance, a rich merchant, who had a house outside the city, and owned many vineyards. He was indulgent to the child, but was much immersed in business. Virgo, her mother, was kindly and on the whole anxious to do her duty, but was by nature a worrier. Orion was the eldest of three girls, and was born in the year 8325 B.C. It was the father's great grievance that he had no son to assist in and inherit his beloved business, and in default of this he decided that his eldest daughter must as speedily as possible marry someone who could take this vacant place. Orion grew up therefore with this idea always before her as an imperative duty, though she had spasms of disgust at the thought. Her childhood was on the whole happy and uneventful, Selene being her principal girl-friend, though somewhat older and more reserved than she was.

Orion's father presently made acquaintance with Scorpio, a capable and pushing middle-aged man, whom he thought just suitable for a partner ; so as soon as she reached the age of seventeen, he imposed this person, then about forty-five, upon her as a husband. She did not at all like the selection, but accepted him obediently. The husband had no affection for her, though he was not generally actively unkind ; he regarded the affair as merely a business transaction which secured his entry into the firm. His business methods proved presently to be somewhat too acute, for the satisfied father discovered that his brilliant partner was swindling him, and misappropriating large sums of money. A furious quarrel occurred, and the pushing partner (who had been living with the family) left the house, of course carrying his wife with him. The father vehemently protested against this, but could not legally prevent it, nor had he the necessary evidence to secure the conviction of the defaulting partner, as the defalcation had been very cleverly managed. The pushing husband set up an establishment of his own in another part of the city and began to enjoy his fraudently obtained wealth, and to use it to embark in new and distinctly shady operations.

Meantime in this new locality his somewhat neglected wife, Orion, made acquaintance with

Achilles, a personable but penniless young man of twenty-two, and at once fell violently in love with him. After a time they eloped, and lived on odd jobs in great happiness and picturesque poverty. The injured husband was furious and threatened condign vengeance; but Orion's father chuckled over the misfortune of his former partner, and caused it to be publicly known that he would welcome his daughter and her lover, if they would make his house their home. They accepted his offer, and the pushing man was more angry than ever. He was just taking the matter up in the most vindictive spirit, when some further frauds of his on a still larger scale came to light, and he was banished from the country, with forfeiture of his wealth and his rights as a citizen.

This set his wife legally free, and she was formally married to the man of her choice. Her father took her second husband into business in place of the swindler, but the young man did not seem to have much head for it, though he was honest and hard-working, and tried to do his duty. He was of artistic temperament, and he and his wife were united by the bonds of closest sympathy as well as by a deep affection. Aldeb was born to them as a son, a handsome promising boy, of whom they were very proud, and some time afterwards a delicate little daughter, Theseus, who, however,

died of some childish complaint at the age of seven. Orion's old playmate, Selene, had long before married Vesta, and they had a little girl, Sirius, just about the same age as Theseus. As they lived next door to Orion, the two children, Sirius and Theseus, had been almost inseparable companions.

When Theseus died, Orion was inconsolable, and did not seem to be able to get over the loss ; indeed, she missed the child so much that when shortly afterwards a pestilence ravaged the country, and the little playmate next door was left an orphan, she begged the elder brother Psyche to allow her to adopt her in place of the lost one. Sirius had always been very much attached to Orion, and now that her parents were dead she was quite willing to go, so that the matter was arranged without any great difficulty, and the adopted child soon came to love her new mother passionately, though she never forgot her own. She also admired Orion's elder son Aldeb, for whom the mother had quite an idolatrous affection. The boy and girl played together frequently, and the former, though several years older, was very fond of the latter and was quite good to her.

One day when they were playing on the rocks a terrible accident occurred ; the boy slipped into the sea and was drowned. When the mother heard of

this she was quite frantic, and when the body was recovered and brought to her she utterly refused to believe that he was dead. Herakles, the priest of the local temple, tried to console her, and told her that she must submit to the will of the gods, that it was better to do so uncomplainingly. She turned upon him fiercely and declared she would *not* submit—that she would have her son back from the dead whether the gods willed it or not. She demanded his return, or rather ordered it, in a mighty and passionate invocation over the body; and as if in obedience to her will, life did gradually return to the prostrate form, and the boy slowly recovered.

He was much changed, however. He seemed strange and dispirited; he did not appear to recognize his friends, and he showed dislike instead of love for his doting mother. Indeed, his disposition was not at all what it had been, and his perversity and bad temper made constant trouble in the house. He was now continually guilty of cruelty and falsehood—vices of which he had shown no trace before his accident. As he grew up he caused his mother and sister much suffering. He had become quite dishonest, and frequently perpetrated petty robberies from various people, the amounts of which his mother again and again made up in order to shield him.

The father declared that the boy was a fairy changeling and no longer the same person at all, but the mother would not let herself believe this, though she suffered in secret under an awful fear that the gods were punishing her in some strange way for her impious defiance of them. Achilles died before the son was quite grown up, and Orion found it impossible to manage him. Presently he seduced Cancer, a girl of low caste, boasted openly of the affair, and announced his intention of marrying her—not that he really contemplated doing it, but in order to deceive and pacify her.

His mother vehemently protested, and, as part of his plan, he took care to spread everywhere an exaggerated story of how she hated the girl. Then he pretended to go away on business, and arranged that the young woman should call at his home during his absence. He returned secretly and murdered her on the threshold of his mother's house, taking care to use a weapon that had belonged to his mother, which he purloined for the purpose. Having done this, he stole away unseen, and in a few days returned as from a distant town, to find his mother, as he expected, under suspicion of having committed the murder. An inquiry was held, but nothing could be proved against her, and there were several points in her favour, so there was no conviction ; but she lay for many years under this

dark and undeserved stigma, and was consequently socially ostracized. She knew perfectly well that her son was the murderer, but held her peace through all these years in order to shield him. The adopted daughter Sirius was absolutely certain of Orion's innocence, and bitterly resented the general opinion on the subject.

Vega was at this time courting Sirius, but she asked him to wait until her mother's name was cleared. Seeing that there was little hope of this, he demanded that she should marry him at once, and offered to share the obloquy which had so unjustly fallen upon the family. The daughter eventually yielded, for the dissolute son had impoverished them by his excesses, and had abandoned them when he found there was no more money. Vega therefore took charge of affairs, and gradually revived the business, which had been utterly ruined. Vega and Sirius had a fairly large family, and Orion's declining years were passed peacefully among them, looking after the grandchildren, whom she loved devotedly. Nothing more was heard of the dissolute son, but the old priest explained that the father had been right in supposing that after the drowning an entirely different person had entered the body—some old enemy, he said, who for the purpose of wreaking his vengeance had taken the opportunity so rashly offered to him by the intense

effort of will made by the frantic mother. The enemy was Gamma.

Some of the other characters with whom we are familiar appeared in Etruria at this period, though they did not play a prominent part in Orion's life.

XVII

TARTARY

Orion was born next in the year 6758 B.C. among the Tartars, as the daughter of Dolphin, one of the prominent members of a nomad tribe. Her father was not the chief, but was nearly related to him, and was a person of considerable wealth and importance; possessing large herds of cattle and great hoards of skins. Her early childhood does not call for any special remark, but unfortunately before she was fifteen she was deceived by a young man, only a couple of years older than herself (Iota, the young mistress whom she had murdered in a previous life in India). There was a great disturbance when this was discovered; her father was furious, and tried hard to detect the man who was responsible for this state of things, but in spite of threatening and severe pressure Orion loyally refused to tell. The young fellow was frightened and had not the

courage to declare himself ; so suspicion fell in turn upon several innocent people, but never upon the real culprit. A child was born—Theseus, the daughter whose body she had once forcibly taken in India, but this time he was a little son, and she loved him all the more dearly because he was regarded by the rest of the family as an encumbrance and a badge of shame.

Her father's anger was partly because he had expected to make a success of her marriage—to make a valuable alliance with the son of the chief, and so bring himself to the centre of power. Now this was no longer possible, as she was regarded as a damaged article and a drug in the matrimonial market. Nevertheless when she was a little over twenty a young man came forward and asked for her hand. He had been a schoolmate of hers, and had long adored her silently from a distance, having no prospects which would make him an eligible suitor. Now, however, he was at last in a position which made marriage a possibility, and he could not but see that her life was a very miserable one, so he ventured diffidently to offer a home to her and her child. It was but a poor home—not at all what she might have expected but for that first love-affair—but she thankfully accepted it as a release from the intolerable discomfort of life with a family who hated and despised her.

Her husband was Cygnus, who had been her son in Hawaii. He treated her well, and her life was now fairly happy, though to some extent embittered by the years of scorn through which she had passed. That experience had at least made her sympathetic towards anyone in the same difficulty, and she persuaded her husband to co-operate in helping several such. In particular there was a case of a young woman of her tribe who had fallen into the same disgrace, and was entirely cast off by her family and left to starve. Orion, though poor herself, and with an ever-increasing family, at once took this unfortunate stranger into her house. The new-comer (who was Cancer, the poisoned wife of Hawaii), was naturally grateful, yet never felt quite at ease with her hostess, and had inexplicable fits of aversion to her. Orion vigorously championed her cause, and maintained that she was in no way blame-worthy. Cancer admitted in strict confidence that the chief's son Aglaia was the father of her child, and Orion resolved that he should be made to acknowledge and provide for it, and to marry the mother. She could not take any steps towards a public exposure, for she felt that as she herself had been intended for the chief's son, her story would be universally regarded as prompted by disappointment and jealousy, and so disbelieved.

She therefore took Cancer to Scorpio, a shaman or medicine-man, who undertook, in consideration of a heavy bribe, to perform incantations which were supposed to make the chief's son fall so violently in love with Cancer that he would marry her at all costs. The difficulties were that she was much below him in station, and that he had just been married with great pomp to a bride of his own rank. The shaman's performances were imposing and gruesome; he unquestionably knew something of magic though of an undesirable kind.

At the culminating ceremony in Scorpio's hut, a dead body was laid before the two terrified women, and after agonized contortions and wearisome chantings on the part of the shaman, after a long, elaborate, uncanny ritual and the burning of much coloured fire, the grisly corpse slowly raised itself and came with spasmodic movements towards the women. They were almost beside themselves with fear, and would have fled but that the galvanized putrefaction was directly between them and the only exit. Scorpio was grovelling on the earth, apparently in some kind of fit, and quite useless as a protector, and the women would probably have gone mad with horror at the loathsome embrace of the four-days-old corpse, but that the ceremony somehow broke down at the most critical moment. The flaming eyes of the dead man were gloating hungrily upon them, and his

discoloured hand was already stretched out to grasp them, when suddenly the unhallowed life went out of him, and he fell stiffly to the ground, carrying Orion down with him. At the same time, the prostrate Scorpio uttered a blood-curdling yell of despair, followed by a strange barking and howling sound; and as Orion disentangled herself from the now rigid corpse and staggered to her feet, Scorpio's writhing body changed its form before her eyes, and he rushed madly from the tent in the shape of a huge black wolf, leaving them alone with the dead man, in the faint light of the dying fires.

How the two women reached home they could never remember, but both were ill with nervous shock for many days; and when at last they had recovered to some extent, they took a most solemn vow never again under any circumstances whatever to attempt to gain any object by means of magical practices. Scorpio later offered to try the spell again, if they would pay a still higher price, but they would have nothing to say to him. It is doubtful whether Orion's nerves ever quite recovered their former strength after that experience, so that she suffered permanently from the effect of her ill-advised attempt to obtain justice for her *protégée*.

She did not, however, resign her purpose, and as spells had produced no apparent result on Aglaia,

she resolved to try another and more direct attack. Under all the circumstances it required almost superhuman courage, but she nerved herself to obtain an interview with the culprit, and made an earnest and moving appeal to him on behalf of Cancer, telling him quite frankly that because she herself had suffered in exactly the same way, she understood the desperate need of help far better than he could.

His better nature was touched and his eyes were opened by her entreaties ; he publicly acknowledged his fault, made over a large amount of property to Cancer to be held in trust for her child, and arranged a marriage for her in another tribe, giving a considerable sum in dowry with her.

We may suppose that by the help given in this incarnation Orion closed the karmic account with Cancer which must have been opened by the poisoning in Hawaii and continued by the murder in Morocco. Apart from the help given to unfortunate women, her life was principally devoted to her eldest son. She was anxious to compensate him for the obloquy which surrounded his birth by establishing him for life in a somewhat higher station than that of her husband, and she finally achieved this, though only at the cost of long-continued self-sacrifice. She was a good and careful mother to her younger children also, but her

exertions for her family overtaxed her strength, and she passed away at the age of fifty-two, happy in the knowledge that all of them were comfortably settled.

XVIII

INDIA

The next appearance of our heroine was in the year 5629 B.C., in a beautiful spot among the hills of India, on the site of Amer, in Rajputana, or very near that city. Orion was one of the daughters of a local potentate, Theo, the Rajah of the district, and was brought up in a splendid marble palace, with wonderful carvings and sculptures about it. She used to play principally upon a great marble terrace which commanded a magnificent view. The court was kept up with much pomp and gorgeous ceremony, and Orion, as a child, hugely enjoyed riding upon a richly-caparisoned elephant and taking part in glittering processions. There were many servants and attendants, and she had everything that she could desire, yet in some ways she was rather a neglected child. Her father's mind was full of the cares of state and the pleasures of the chase, and her mother, Lomia, thought chiefly of the innumerable intrigues which always

permeate an Indian court. They were both kind to the child in a careless fashion, but to both of them boys who could grow up into fighting men and inherit thrones were the only really interesting offspring ; so the little girl's passionate longing for heartfelt affection remained unsatisfied.

At her birth, her horoscope had been cast by the family astrologer, according to custom, and he foretold for her a somewhat uncommon fate. He said that in her case the stars indicated a past of unusual sorrow and a future of unusual glory—that the latter was drawing very near to her, yet it would not come in this life, which was to be regarded as the last link in a long chain of cause and effect. A debt which had been outstanding for thousands of years was now to be paid, he said ; if it were rightly paid, it would lead to a male birth next time, and to the opportunity for great occult advancement. Meantime the very life would be to some extent an epitome of the whole, for there would be in it great sorrow and yet also great joy and peace.

She received a certain amount of education, mostly of a religious type. She was taught to recite some of the Vedic hymns and to perform curious little domestic ceremonies. When she was sixteen she was assigned in marriage under rather peculiar circumstances. An embassy came from

Corona, a King far away in Kathiawar, to ask on behalf of his son, Sirius, for the hand of Orion's elder sister Juno. The sister had just been betrothed to a nearer neighbour, so the Rajah had to send apologies and regrets, but in order to avoid disappointment (for this was a good alliance and he did not wish to lose the opportunity which it offered), he ventured to suggest his second daughter instead. The embassy therefore, carried her off on approval, as it were. Her feelings in the matter were mixed, for while she was flattered at the prospect of marriage into an old and honoured family, she was also somewhat indignant at being proposed as a substitute for her sister, uncertain how she would be received, and nervous at leaving the only home that she had ever known.

Little heed was paid to her feelings in the matter, however, and her father and mother dismissed her—kindly enough, but very much as a matter of course. On the journey she wondered often what the prince would be like, and tried to persuade herself that she might be able to arrange a very tolerable life for herself, if he were no worse than most whom she had known at home. When she arrived at the end of her journey she was undeniably nervous, and heartily wished herself at home again; but when she met her prince (Sirius) she received a pleasurable shock and soon forgot all about home;

for the two young people were fortunately strongly attracted to one another at first sight, and in a few days became ardent lovers.

The reserved and rather bored young lady of Amer opened out under the influence of real love like a flower in the sunlight ; and she threw herself into this new life with a joyous wonder that was beautiful to see. Her love made her take an interest in all that interested her prince, and therefore she set herself to try to understand his religion, which was quite different from her own. She had been brought up in the Hindu faith, though it had never been much more to her than a series of forms which it was proper to observe ; while the prince was a Jain. It had been stipulated in the marriage-contract that she was to be allowed to retain her ancestral faith and beliefs, but that did not prevent the young people from comparing their respective scriptures and teachings, and they soon decided that it all amounted to substantially the same thing, and worshipped in one another's temples with serene impartiality.

The great Jain temple at Girnar had already been described in the forty-first life of Alcyone, and it was there mentioned that on her seventeenth birthday Orion gave birth to Gamma, her first child, in the little rock guest-chamber over its gateway. As usual, the child's horoscope was cast but its prognostications

were by no means good. It foretold for him a wayward character, that would cause much suffering both to himself and to others, but with the opportunity of final victory at the cost of great self-sacrifice, if he chose to take it. It certainly seemed that at least part of this prediction was accurate, for the nature which the boy developed as he grew was not a good one, and it brought much sorrow to his parents.

One of the tenets most strongly insisted upon was (and still is) scrupulous kindness to every living thing, but this child displayed innate cruelty and callousness, and seemed to be without any natural principle of honour. The grief which these defects caused to the father and mother was intensified by the knowledge that this was the heir to the throne and the destined ruler of the country. They were very patient with the boy, and tried very hard to help him to improve his character, but with only very moderate success. They had several other children of more normal type, and these were a great comfort to them. The love between the husband and wife never lessened or varied, and the prince declined to follow the custom of his country by taking additional wives.

Soon his father Corona, the Rajah, died ; so the cares of the government were laid upon his shoulders. Orion thus became the Rānī, or queen, of the

country, and bore her new honours gracefully fulfilling her duties to the satisfaction of all. Sirius often had to be away for considerable periods, as he was a great warrior, and during these times he left the government in her hands, instead of appointing a regent. She seems to have done the work admirably; possibly the experience of centuries ago in South India may have been useful there. Her life would have been entirely happy but for the anxiety caused by the frequent absences of her husband and the troubles due to the behaviour of her eldest son, who did not improve as he grew. The remonstrances of his father and mother produced little effect upon him, and he did not seem amenable to the influence of affection. He took to gambling, dishonesty and loose living generally, and bitterly resented all rebukes. The father, when at home, kept him in some sort of check; though even this much of restraint excited his passions.

Presently a rebellion was fomented by a distant relation of the Rajah, who set up a sort of shadowy claim to the throne; and Gamma fled from home and joined the rebels. These were, however, defeated and he was captured. He made submission to his father, and seemed really ashamed of his actions for the time, but gradually he slipped back and resumed his old unruly life, resenting as before any restriction imposed upon

him. The father and mother were always patient and forbearing with him, for their religion counselled them to forgive to the uttermost; but he seemed to become more and more estranged and adopted a permanently dissatisfied and hostile attitude. Some discreditable love-affairs brought him a good deal of suffering, and one of his undesirable feminine acquaintances spurred him into certain acts of treachery against his father. These being discovered, he fled once more from the court and joined himself to the army of an enemy then just about to attack his country. The Rajah was much hampered by the fact that his plans of battle and the conditions of the defence were in this way betrayed to his enemy.

This caused trouble at first and some slight reverses, but the Rajah finally won a great battle and disposed definitely of the invaders. In this battle he himself was seriously wounded by the hand of his erring son who, however, turned aside and fled in horror when he saw his father fall. Sirius had himself put into a litter, and still continued to direct the battle till victory was assured. The recreant son was captured amongst a host of others, and once more brought before his father and mother. The mother, who had so often forgiven all else, could not for a long time overlook the fatal injury to the father; but the latter urged that if even now at the

eleventh hour the son was really repentant, he should be restored to favour and his position, and should have another chance. His will prevailed at last, and the young man, in a very touching scene, showed real contrition and earnest resolve to do better.

So great was his self-abasement now, that he begged to be allowed to renounce his princely rank and devote all the rest of his life to austerities as a hermit in order to atone for his wickedness ; but the Brahman priests told him that he must prove his newly developed virtue by doing his duty in daily life before he could have the right to the privilege of asceticism. He accepted their decision, though with much regret, and set himself humbly and loyally to overcome the dislike which his countrymen not unnaturally felt for him. While the Rajah lay dying (for he never really recovered from the wound), the defeated enemy gathered together a new army and again attempted an invasion. The reformed Gamma took the field against them, but the knowledge of his country's weak points which he himself had given them made it very difficult to deal with them successfully.

Finally it seemed as though the only way to avoid defeat was for a small party to devote themselves to a desperate deed of valour which meant certain death. Gamma planned this and insisted on leading it in

person, and he fell fighting gloriously at the head of his men, in the act of self-sacrifice which saved his country. He died with his mother's name upon his lips, and his last words were a message to her, begging her to forgive his many crimes, and to accept his death as the beginning of his atonement for all the wrong that he had done her. Orion was so overwhelmed with sorrow at the approaching death of her husband that, at the time, she perhaps scarcely appreciated the action of her son ; but the common people made ballads about his deed and exalted him (now that he was dead) into a kind of hero and saviour, wisely letting his unsavoury earlier history sink into oblivion. The Rajah strongly charged his wife to put away her grief and to concentrate all her energies upon advising her second son Fomal, who, though yet very young, must so soon take up the reins of government. For his sake she promised to do this and, when death took her husband, she bravely and nobly kept her vow.

The departed Rajah held himself in touch with the earth-plane for some years in order to be at hand to help her, and often she realized this and found it a great comfort. But he soon saw that her judgment might be trusted, and that he might pass on in peace and confidence. She was a sort of permanent adviser and power behind the throne for twenty-one years, until her young son had reached

middle-age and proved himself a capable and careful ruler. She died at the age of sixty-two, eagerly looking forward to rejoining her husband, whom she had never forgotten for a day. The philosophy, which she had first learned in her youth because it had interested *him* so much, had proved the reliable guide of her late life and the stay of her declining years. Her stay on the astral plane was short, but she had a long heaven-life, in which Sirius was the principal figure.

In this incarnation much progress was made, and the last and heaviest of the karmic links forged long ago seemed to have been broken, so that all was now ready for the effort to be made in the next life.

XIX

EGYPT

We pass now from the grave sweetness of the Indian life to the rollicking jollity of ancient Egypt, which yet was animated by such unswerving earnestness and was so capable of stupendous achievement. Duty was the ruling idea in both countries, and yet it worked out so very differently in practical life. Orion was born in the year 4015 B.C. near Memphis, again in a high rank—in fact, he was nearly related to the royal family of the period, as is shown by the

fact that later on he married one of Pharoah's daughters. Circumstances could hardly give a more favourable birth than this, amidst the leisure and refinement of the cultured classes of a splendid civilization, with parents of the right sort and with occult Wisdom always at the service of those who were willing to work for it.

His father was Achilles and his mother Aldeb, and Orion's name was Kephren. They were near neighbours of Markab, a high political official, whose family name was Anarseb. The eldest son of that family was Sirius, then called Menka—Anarseb Menka, for in Egypt the surname came first. He had been the husband of Orion in the eighteenth life, but as the astrolger's prophecy of a male birth for Orion had been fulfilled, the same relation could not be reproduced this time, and the situation was further altered by the fact that Sirius was twenty-one years older, and a rather stern and reserved young man, with grave responsibilities upon his shoulders. Nevertheless, the old affection between them asserted itself, and even as a child Orion was constantly in the house, playing with Sirius' little brother Senefru, whom we know as Vega, and persuading the grave and occupied Sirius (who, however, was never stern towards the children), to tell them stories, or join in their games in the garden.

The houses of the better class in those times were always set in the midst of lovely gardens which were very carefully kept. A great feature of these gardens was the large proportion of water in them—the wide and numerous ponds in which many beautiful varieties of water-lily were grown, especially the sacred lotus, in its three varieties—blue, white and rose-coloured. These flowers were very tastefully arranged and interspersed with graceful fountains; for a particular kind of landscape gardening had attained a decidedly high level at this period. The land of Egypt being by nature absolutely flat and of yellow sand, the gardens were made as different from this as possible, and were entirely composed of artificial mounds and irregularities, planted with noble trees, and everywhere surrounded by palms and miniature lakes, and diversified by marble or red granite steps and summer-houses, flowers in riotous confusion covering every available spot. Of course, places of this kind made ideal playgrounds; and, as the climate was warm, and the children when small wore nothing but collars, bracelets and anklets of gold, they naturally learned to swim as soon as they could walk, and were as much in the ponds as on the flights of steps, or among the stately trees that separated them.

As they grew older the children were supposed to wear a single garment of white linen, but they seem

to have preferred to reserve it for state occasions, or for the presence of their elders. It is noteworthy that, at this period, hardly anything but white linen was worn by rich and poor alike ; it looks as though cotton or woollen materials were unknown. Officials wore coloured borders to their garments, and gorgeous golden embroideries, but the taste of the period was evidently for the plain white ; so much so, that to look down upon a crowd was like glancing over a sheet of snow. Practically everybody who wore clothes at all changed them about three times a day, so that washing was constantly going on everywhere ; and the whole land was one vast drying ground, which added another unit to the blinding whiteness of everything. Even the roads were white, and had to be kept so, under severe penalties. Each householder was responsible for the cleaning and repair of the road in front of his property, and to foul the road in any way or to cast rubbish upon it was a punishable offence. Every man of wealth and position kept in his household not only a large retinue of servants, but also a large number of artificers to do whatever he required—his own private tailor, goldsmith and carpenter, for example, and of course a corps of gardeners.

Orion's childhood under such circumstances was naturally a happy one. The father and mother were assiduous and affectionate, and on the whole wise

in their training of the boy, and he had pleasant surroundings and companions. He was a boy of kindly nature, capable of strong love, but impetuous and sometimes wilful.

Another kind adult friend was Ramasthenes (Mercury), who resided in the house of Menka for two years when Orion was eight years old ; the boy was very fond of him and used often to sit beside him along with Vega. Towards the end of that time Mercury was arranging to devote himself to the temple life, and one day when he was seated in one of those curious curved Egyptian chairs, and little Orion sat on a wooden stool at his feet, he stooped and lifted the boy on to his knee, asking him whether he would like to live in the temple with him, to learn from the sacred books, and to take part in the services and gorgeous temple processions. But the little boy did not answer him, for his attention was caught at the moment by a butterfly in the garden, so he slipped down from his knee and rushed in pursuit of it. Mercury looked after him with a smile and said :

“ I wonder whether that is prophetic ? ”

One reason why the subject of his entering the temple was specially considered was that one day when one of the chief priests was visiting the Anarseb house, he noticed the boy, and said that he had the eyes of a seer. The father and mother

were very desirous that he should adopt that line of life, and Orion himself as he grew up liked the idea.

He was presently entered as a day-scholar at the temple, spending the whole of each day there, but returning home at night. Later he often slept there for weeks together, but still had intervals of home life. Once when he was perhaps fourteen, he felt one night an uncontrollable impulse to rise from his couch and go to the room of Mercury. He reasoned with himself that this feeling was absurd, and that it would be an unheard-of impertinence for a boy to go in the middle of the night and disturb a priest from his slumbers or perhaps his devotions. But the unaccountable desire grew stronger and stronger, and at last he had to go. He hesitated long before he could bring himself to knock at the door, but when at last he timidly did so, a full strong voice bade him enter, and he saw Mercury sitting in his chair facing him with a brilliant smile.

“ So you have come at last,” he said, “ but why did you resist so long ? ”

Then he told him how he had tried the experiment of calling him by thought, in order to see whether he was sufficiently responsive to make it worth while to take him later as a regular pupil for occult development. On reaching a certain stage in the priesthood a man was allowed, if he chose, to take a boy or young man as a kind of half-pupil,

half-attendant ; the idea apparently being not so much that the lad would have teaching different from that given to the other students, as that he would be always within the magnetism of his master, and so would be aided in his advancement. It was a common saying in the temples that a pupil's greatest progress was often made when he thought least about it—meaning that when the pupil's mind was at rest or quietly occupied, the influence of the master was steadily playing at all levels upon him, spiritual, mental and emotional, even though he was quite unconscious that any effect was being produced upon him.

Mercury expected to attain the position necessary to enable him to take such a pupil in five or six years' time, and he now definitely made the offer of the post to Orion, who accepted with much joy and gratitude. Sirius very heartily congratulated the boy, and urged him to spend the intervening years in qualifying himself to make the most of the opportunity. The father and mother were also much pleased, and all the omens seemed most favourable. Orion on the whole worked well and even enthusiastically, though now and then curious spasms of contrariness came over him which often undid the effect of the months of striving.

He formed some rather undesirable acquaintances—young fellows who were not bad at heart but were

given to careless living, to gambling and to the dissipations of the city. Unfortunately their loose talk inspired him with a desire to try this city life which they described as so manly and amusing, and made him think the restrictions of the temple irksome and unnecessary. He was also attracted somewhat by Egeria, a young woman of good family whom he had seen in their company, and so it happened that when the great opportunity came, a sudden perverse impulse seized him at the last moment, so that he refused the kind offer of Mercury, and went off with his new and more worldly-minded friends to plunge into the diversions of the city. This caused great grief to his parents, as well as to Mercury and Sirius; and soon Orion came to his senses and bitterly regretted his foolishness and ingratitude. However, it was too late then; the step which he had taken rendered it quite impossible that he should be admitted as a pupil to the temple, so his parents decided that the sooner he was married and established in ordinary life the better.

When this was known the Pharaoh Unas offered his daughter, Helios, who knew the young man well and had long looked upon him with a favourable eye. Naturally this offer was at once accepted—indeed it would have been scarcely possible to refuse it—and the marriage took place with great

pomp and wonderful ceremonies and processions. The bride and bridegroom were crowned with flowers, and rode on white donkeys, for neither horses nor carriages were yet known in the land.

Orion ardently loved his young wife, but even in the midst of all this festivity the sad thought of his great mistake came upon him with crushing force. He paid a visit to the temple, but the chief priest, who had remarked upon his eyes in childhood, received him very coldly, and told him that it would be many thousand years before he regained the chance that he had lost. But Mercury said :

“I will give it to him whenever he is ready to take it, even if it be many thousand years hence.”

Orion lived a long life and met with considerable success along military and political lines, yet never for a moment did he cease to feel the keenest regret for his failure. His wife died young, but left behind her a son named Ptah-hetep (Selene), who was from the first a studious youth, and grew up to be a very learned man, and wrote a widely celebrated book on *The Wisdom of Egypt*. Selene lived to extreme old age—over a hundred years—and was much respected for his learning.¹

¹ This life of Orion was investigated by C. W. Leadbeater in 1907 at Weisser-Hirsch, Germany. I still recall his unusual excitement when he said one morning that he had discovered that I was Ptah-Hetep (and also the boy Chatta Mānavaka of Buddhist

The shadow which overhung Orion's life to some extent soured his disposition, and he never met Mercury without a feeling of shame. Nevertheless he kept up a friendship with him, and was always interested in philosophical studies in the intervals of his other work. His old friend Sirius met with serious reverses, and was for some years in considerable difficulties, being compelled to sell the beautiful home on the river-bank where the children had so often played.¹ But in process of years he worked himself up again and was able to buy back the ancestral home, so he and Orion became neighbours once more. Sirius died before Orion reached the age of fifty, and the latter survived him by twenty-three years, his later days being somewhat lonely, as all the friends for whom he cared had passed on before him. Towards the end of his life he grew miserly, being troubled with a quite unfounded fear that he would come to poverty.

Evidently this royal life in Egypt, under such remarkably favourable conditions, was intended to be the climax towards which many previous incarnations had led. But choice must always be free,

legend). At the end of the book, *The Instruction of Ptah Hotep* (translated by B. G. Gunn, 1909, Wisdom of the East Series) Ptah-Hotep says that he lived 110 years. A reader who cares to read Ptah-Hotep today will find that I have not changed much. C. W. Leadbeater's brief comment was that Ptah-Hotep in his old age was "very prosy".—C. J.

¹ See *The Lives of Alcyone*, Life XLIII, p. 609.

and Orion chose wrongly, thus postponing the designed culmination, to a large extent wrecking the life, and seriously affecting the length of the interval in the heaven-world which followed it. He was away from earth only some twelve hundred years—a rather shorter absence than that which ensued upon the Semite life in Poseidonis, although the earthly part of that life was scarcely more than half as long as this one in Egypt.

Two other families, or rather branches of one family, were close friends of Orion and his parents, and prominent members of the group which studied under Mercury. A list of them will be found attached to the corresponding life of Alcyone, Life XLIII.

XX

SOUTH AFRICA

This time our investigations carry us to a part of the world which we have not before visited, for Orion took birth in 2,736 B. C. in an Arab race in South Africa. The country then did not look barren, as so much of it does now ; it was park-like, and there were vast herds of wild beasts. There were some large cities and imposing temples, but the style was peculiar. No mortar was used, but huge

well-cut stones were laid upon one another and just left so. The religion was a form of sun-worship, and the temples were consequently oriented. The people were a tall handsome race, usually brave and good fighters. Their principal weapons were the sword and the spear, though arrows and javelins were occasionally used. They were great hunters, and large numbers of cattle were kept, but there were also agricultural and mercantile sections in the population.

Orion's father seems to have combined the various avocations, for he owned lands and flocks, but at the same time was a hunter and trader, and when occasion required he proved himself a good soldier also. Orion's education was primitive but severely practical; he was taught to ride, to handle skilfully a spear and a small sword, and to understand the various manners of hunting, also the ways of wild animals. Reading, writing and cyphering were part of the curriculum, and he learned also how to dress and bandage wounds. Instant obedience and military discipline were exacted; it was partly to learn these lessons that the ego took this birth. Orion was the eldest son, but soon had some brothers and sisters. As the heir, he had a small slave-boy, Gamma, about his own age, assigned to him as a special attendant, and he seemed more affectionate to the slave-boy than to his own brothers and sisters.

This boy was devoted to him, and tried to anticipate all his wishes. As he grew older his love for his young master seemed to increase, and through the whole of his life he was always his closest personal attendant. Twice he saved Orion's life, once from a lion (who, however, wounded Orion seriously), and once in battle, as will presently be seen.

As Orion grew up, he used to accompany his father on hunting expeditions, and soon grew very expert. In³ due course he and his younger brother, Scorpio, fell in love with the same young woman, Kappa, and in consequence the relations between them became strained. She secretly preferred the younger man, but she married the elder, because his prospects were better. Still, they had several years of fairly happy life, though the wife was not capable of anything like the power of love displayed by the husband. He idealized her greatly, and only rarely had a sense of something lacking.

Presently a rebellion arose in the country, and a usurper seized upon the throne ; the younger brother, largely because of the quarrel some years before about the lady, took the side of the usurper, while Orion, who had espoused the cause of the rightful King, Sigma, was driven into exile with him. For four years they took refuge with a tribe who lived in enormous caves—a people of negroid race. The

caves were very remarkable—extending for miles into the heart of the mountains, so that no man knew all their intricacies. There was a legend among this tribe that another and quite different tribe was to be found far within the inmost recesses, never coming near the light of day at all, but living out its life by some strange light of its own, in tremendous halls where cold and storm never penetrated. This race was said to be gigantic in stature, and to differ in many ways from ordinary humanity. All sorts of wild stories gathered round these troglodyte giants, who were regarded with great terror by the cave-men close to the surface.

Orion was curious about them and rather sceptical, and once undertook an exploring expedition into the depths of the caves, supplied with huge bundles of torches. He and his companions penetrated some miles, and saw many strange things; among them they came upon a sort of pocket or collection of very fine diamonds, one especially being of most unusual size. Further in they encountered a gigantic prehistoric monster of some kind—probably a dinosaur—and fled in great affright, losing their way and suffering great privations before they succeeded in finding their own cave.

The story of a giant race in the depths seems to have had some foundation; it was evidently a

Lemurian survival. Probably the men had taken refuge in these great caves when some Atlantean race conquered the country, and had found it possible to maintain themselves there.

Orion offered his bag of jewels to his King, and broached a project which their discovery had suggested to him. In the original kingdom, the most valuable of the crown jewels was a remarkable diamond-hilted sword supposed to be of very great age and to have various magical qualities. The legend was that whoever possessed this sword was by its right the ruler of the country, and it was partly through capturing it by treachery that the usurper had succeeded in making himself so rapidly master of the land. The work on the hilt of this sword was wonderfully fine, and the most valuable part of its decoration was a huge diamond, far larger than any known to those people. Now the finest specimen in Orion's treasure-trove was quite equal to it—if anything rather larger; so the idea had occurred to Orion that it might be possible to prepare a duplicate of the diamond sword, and he thought that if the King suddenly reappeared among his partisans in apparently miraculous possession of what could hardly fail to be taken for the sacred relic, their belief in its mystical properties would so assure them of victory as to make them practically invincible, and thus the throne might be regained.

The King's imagination was fired, and he quite felt that if he had the magic sword of his forefathers, he could speedily reduce his rebellious subjects to submission ; but he did not at all believe that this result could be achieved by a substitute. Indeed, he rather thought that even to make such an imitation would be a dangerous or impious act, calculated to offend the spirit of the sword, and perhaps cause him to withdraw himself from it, and thus rob it of its peculiar powers.

Orion, finding that his first plan was not well received, conceived another ; he offered to make his way back in disguise to their country, somehow to manage to steal the sacred sword, and bring it back to the King. After much discussion the King accepted his suggestion, and Orion set off accompanied only by his faithful servant, Gamma. They reached their country in safety and unsuspected, but had to wait for months to carry out an elaborate plot before they could get hold of the carefully guarded magic sword.

Meantime Orion discovered that his younger brother had annexed his wife—perhaps honestly believing him dead, but at any rate quite willing to believe it, without taking much trouble to verify the rumour. He was very indignant about this, and there was a great struggle between his loyalty to his King and his mission, which compelled him to

retain his disguise and keep silent, and his burning desire to declare himself and take instant vengeance on his faithless wife and brother. For forty-eight hours he sat on the floor, without taking food, wrestling with himself over this problem, but at last loyalty triumphed and he resigned his revenge for the time—a really wonderful victory, when we consider his impulsiveness in previous lives.

At last his plot succeeded, and he fled one night with the magic sword in his possession. By some accident, its absence was discovered much sooner than he had calculated ; a pursuit was undertaken, and by the next night he and Gamma were overtaken, overpowered after a short struggle, and captured. But the captors made the mistake of encamping for that night, and before dawn the resourceful Gamma had contrived to free both himself and his master from their bonds, had murdered the guard and stolen the sword from the officer in charge.

Both Orion and Gamma had been wounded in the fray, but they made the best progress they could, and were fortunate enough to discover a good place of concealment, where they had to lie for nearly two days while the remainder of their late captors were frenziedly searching for them.

What with wounds and want of food they were in a pitiable state when they eventually reached their cave and their King ; but since they brought

the diamond sword the latter received them with much joy and commendation. The usurper endeavoured to conceal the fact that the sword was lost, but it became known in spite of his efforts, and the superstition of the people made them feel that his cause was already lost, and his sceptre departed from him. So when the true King suddenly reappeared with a small but determined army of followers, the resistance offered was only half-hearted, and the usurper fled in dismay. In the fighting Orion was struck down, but Gamma stood over him and was killed in defending him.

Orion recovered from his wounds and was placed by the King in a position of honour. There was a painful scene when he disclosed himself to his wife and brother, who were much terrified at his stern reproaches. However, he forgave them and took back his wife, but insisted that his brother should leave the country. Even though this decision was accepted, Orion does not seem to have trusted his wife. He declined to live any longer in the town, but took up his abode with his family in a strange stone building (a relic of some earlier race) which stood on the hill-side. It had somewhat the appearance of a Muhammadan mosque, and had evidently been erected by people who understood architecture much better than these Arabs. Here he continued to reside until killed at the age of

forty-eight in battle with a neighbouring tribe. Before his exile he had some children, but they are not recognizable. He was brave in fight, but had never the delight in it which animated his countrymen. This life never satisfied the higher side of his nature, but it gave valuable lessons of discipline, patience and self-control.

XXI

PERSIA

Orion next appeared in the year 1879 B.C. in the kingdom of Persia, then in a condition of very high civilization. He was the son of Nu, a rich merchant and a good and kindly man, but too much immersed in his business to pay much attention to his little boy. The child was full of affection, but unfortunately no one seemed to want it or to have time for it; his mother Aglaia, a fine lady whom he worshipped at a distance, was entirely occupied with two younger children, her little girl Capri and her boy-baby Hebe. Orion was rather self-repressed, and grew up inside a shell until the age of seven. Then an event occurred which suddenly changed the whole course of his life.

His father was about to open a branch of his business in an outlying city on the borders of the

empire, so he decided to establish himself and his household there for a year or two, in order to give it a good start. He and his servants and all the goods that he needed made quite a caravan of camels, and when they passed beyond the more frequented roads they attracted the notice of a band of robbers, who attacked them. They made a stout resistance, but the bandits were too strong for them; the father and the servants were killed, and the mother and children and all the goods were seized and were about to be carried off.

While the fight was still in progress another small caravan appeared on the scene, and its leader, Sirius, seeing what was happening, hurried his men forward to the assistance of the travellers who were being attacked. He was too late to be of any use, for the fight was over before he could reach the ground, but the robbers were so hurried by his approach that they lost part of their booty. They succeeded in driving off the laden camels along with their own, but they failed to secure their captives. Aglaia was wildly with a man who was carrying off her little ones, and she clung to him so determinedly that in order to free himself he had to stab her repeatedly. In the rush Orion, who was being held in front of one of the robbers, fell from the camel to the ground and there was no time to pick him up, so when the leader of the

second caravan dashed on to the scene the boy was the only living being left.

The poor child lay half-stunned upon the sand, cowering and sobbing, almost wild with horror. Sirius leapt to the ground and tried to comfort him, swearing a solemn oath to guard and cherish him as his own son ; but the shock had been so great that it was some hours before the trembling and hysterical sobbing ceased. Then instead of clinging convulsively to his new protector, the boy nestled restfully into his arms and looked up shyly and gratefully into his face. All that time the leader sat on the sand holding and soothing the bereaved child, and it was only when he was sound asleep that he laid him upon some unrolled rugs and covered him with his own cloak. When the boy awoke the next morning there was already a strong bond of affection between them, for in spite of the apparently accidental character of this meeting, the old tie was already reasserting itself.

Sirius had been the hereditary chief of an Arab tribe. He had a strong interest in all matters religious, philosophical and occult, and this had led him to pay a visit of investigation to a city peopled by magicians of more than doubtful character in the interior of Arabia. He met among them some acquaintances of other lives, Phoea, Alastor and Cancer, but he obtained no real satisfaction from

them ; so he decided to seek further. From many travellers he heard the fame of the astrologers and magicians of Persia, so at last he resolved to take up his abode in that country and devote his life to the study of such subjects. He consequently resigned his chieftainship into the hands of his younger brother Selene, and set out for Persia, meeting on his way with the adventure already described. Thus it happened that he arrived on the scene of his future studies with an unexpected addition to his party in the shape of a little adopted son.

Orion expanded wonderfully under the influence of the first real affection that had been lavished upon him in this life, and bloomed out into a lively and most engaging child. For a long time he fell into fits of shuddering horror whenever any incident recalled vividly the massacre that he had seen ; he never could bear to look upon violence or bloodshed, and again and again he vowed that he would never under any provocation take part in any kind of fighting. Sirius carried him with him as he travelled about the country, and when they reached the city where his home had been, Sirius made inquiry about Nu's property, in order to see whether any of it was available for the boy. He found that it had all been divided between Apis and Stella, the business partners of the dead man. They were willing to allow the boy a share in the business, but only if he stayed

with them, and was educated by them in business methods. But as Orion would not hear of being parted from Sirius, and the latter certainly did not intend to give up his adopted son, it was resolved to waive all claim to any portion of the property, and leave the partners to do what they would with it.

Sirius visited many temples and seats of learning, and finally decided to settle down at one of them definitely as a student and pupil. He therefore dismissed his train and sold his camels. But for Orion he would probably have adopted the altogether ascetic life which his teachers recommended, but he regarded him as a sacred charge, and indeed the affection between them was so strong that nothing could have parted them. Sirius had brought with him some jewels as presents for the religious teachers, not knowing at that time that no teacher of the kind that he sought would accept any such reward. He now sold these gems by degrees, and with what they realized and with the proceeds of the sale of the caravan, the simple needs of the two were provided for a long time.

In the course of his studies Sirius had to copy for his own use many of the temple manuscripts. He had rather a knack of doing this neatly, and finding it a congenial occupation, made extra copies and sold them, thus developing in time a regular and profitable business. As Orion grew, he also delighted

to help in the copying, and could do it admirably, but most of all he enjoyed playing upon the harp and upon a vina-like instrument in which the strings were stretched across a hollowed and highly polished pumpkin. He speedily obtained great proficiency in this, and was constantly employed, even while still very young, to play at the temple services.

The life of Sirius at this time was a happy one, divided between studying and writing, and playing with the boy and teaching him. He learned a good deal of the star-lore which had been handed down from the ancient Chaldeans, and since astrological prediction was part of this, he once consulted Lyra, a very holy and learned priest, about the boy's future. According to this man the stars foretold for Orion an early and violent death, but nevertheless (with apparent contradiction) a future of glory and spiritual advancement. The priest was unable to reconcile these indications, and Sirius often wondered about them. Though he had attached himself to a certain temple they also visited others from time to time, and by degrees became acquainted with all the principal cities of the land. Orion was much interested in these cities, but Sirius preferred the country life with plenty of time for meditation.

One remarkable feature in one of the cities was a kind of enormously wide step-pyramid, made of

earth faced with stone, the effect being to give a series of wide and gradually-retreating terraces, all of which were planted with the most gorgeous flowers, and even shrubs and great trees. Sirius was presently initiated into some of the mysteries of the religion then in vogue ; his interest in all this never flagged, and he always taught the boy as much of it as he was allowed to repeat. There were a few temples of the darker magic, and their priests were always on the watch for young people of either sex whom they could utilize for clairvoyant work. When Orion was about fifteen, one of the priests of this religion caught sight of him and made a determined effort to inveigle him into his power. His principal lure was Daphne, a girl only two or three years older than Orion, and he was very nearly successful. Sirius suspected him and vehemently opposed the whole affair, but it was only Orion's intense and unwavering affection for Sirius that enabled the latter finally to prevail.

He understood that Orion did not know into what sort of company he was being drawn, so with great difficulty he contrived to find a spot from which he and Orion were able secretly to witness one of the horrible black ceremonies of the period, in which the girl in question was taking a prominent part. Orion was at once and forever cured of all predilection in that direction ; the sight of the ceremony

made him physically sick, and provoked an almost hysterical repugnance and terror. It produced an exceedingly vivid vision (which was really a remembrance from the Tartar life) of a corpse that moved and spoke, and of a magician who changed into a wolf. The discovery that, in his suspicions of the priest and the girl, Sirius had been so entirely justified, made still stronger the tie between them, for it added to the profound sense of gratitude which the adopted son already felt for the father, a further thankfulness for deliverance from a second danger even greater than the first.

In their journeyings from temple to temple and city to city they usually rode donkeys, and it was on one of these expeditions that an abrupt end came to their idyllic life together. In a lonely place a band of Bedouins swept down upon them. Their numbers were far too great to permit of any attempt at a fight, even apart from Orion's vow to avoid slaughter, so there was nothing for it but instant flight. As they dashed off Sirius was wounded by a javelin and fell from his donkey, but called to Orion to ride on at full gallop, as this delay would give him a good start and ensure his escape. Orion refused to do this, and returned to the side of Sirius. True to his vow he lifted no hand to defend himself, and they were both cut to pieces instantly by the savage pirates of the desert. So it might be

truly said of these two that they were "lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided". Orion was but seventeen and Sirius about forty-five.

XXII

ASIA MINOR

Having been killed so young, Orion came back quickly into earth-life appearing in 1521 B.C. in the city of Agadé, situated in Asia Minor on the shores of the Dardanelles, somewhere near where the town of Lampsaki now is. The city was built around a crescent-shaped harbour, with two little peaks rising behind it, on one of which stood the great white marble temple of Pallas Athene, of which Mercury was then the Chief Priest. The ruling race of the city was Greek, of the old Ionian type, and it was to this white race that the temple of Pallas belonged. The actual administration of the government of the city was in the hands of two elected officials, who were called archons. The greater part of the population were of a much darker reddish race, probably Hittites who had held the country before it was conquered by the early Greeks some centuries before. These Hittites were worshippers of Tammuz, and of the veiled goddess Tanais or Ishtar (the Ashtaroth of

the Bible) and they had a great temple down in the city where the religion was of a corrupt character and many undesirable magical ceremonies were performed.

In the temple of Pallas the Divine Wisdom was worshipped, and a high and pure type of teaching was given. At the secret meetings of the initiated priests an Indian Adept (the Master of Mercury) sometimes materialized and gave instruction. A curious and powerful magnetic centre had been established there. A spherical cavity had been hollowed out in the living rock, deep down directly under the altar. This cavity had no entrance whatever—no physical communication with anything else; yet floating in the midst of it there burnt always a steady electric-looking glow or flame. Above, upon the floor of the temple, beside the altar stood a curious stone throne, which had been hollowed out of a huge meteorite, and was regarded with great veneration as having fallen from heaven. There were some vestal virgins attached to the temple (Herakles, Eudoxia, and Rhea were amongst them) and at certain services the vestal virgin on duty used to sit in this great stone chair and pass into a trance condition under the influence of the tremendous magnetic force from below. When in this state the virgins delivered sermons to the people, or rather, sermons were delivered

through them by the Adept Teacher or others. During these trances the High Priest always stood close by the chair to watch over the body of the virgin and see that no harm came to her. Frequently also special messages were given through the entranced virgin to individuals among the worshippers, and to receive such a message was considered a high honour.

There were ten of these virgins, though usually five were in active service, taking turns at the work, while the other five were younger girls who were being trained. (Thetis was noticed as one of the girls in course of training). These girls were bound by no permanent vows, and could leave the temple whenever they wished, though while there they were obliged to conform to strict rules. All had to leave on reaching a certain age, and it was customary for them to marry and enter ordinary life. It was however open to them, if they chose, to return to the temple after a certain time and attach themselves to it permanently, and many did this. While they were in office the highest honour was paid to these vestals, and they seem to have been quite a power in the city; for example, they had the curious privilege of remitting judicial sentences if they thought fit, when appeal was made to them.

Orion was the son of Muni, a rich and dignified merchant and town councillor, good and indulgent,

but not specially a religious man. The mother Helios was an eager, keen-faced woman, intensely interested in philosophy. Orion had two brothers, Sappho and Tolosa, and three sisters, Theseus, Egeria and Eros. The children were well educated, though the curriculum was different from ours. They all learned modelling in clay and the making of pottery, which was very effectively ornamented with figures of animals. They were taught various elaborate forms of writing, and the illumination of books was carried to a very high level. The books were usually parchment scrolls rolled on ivory sticks, and the writing was archaic Greek, but running from right to left. The children played many games, especially a ball game which they called *sphariké*. They wore light and graceful linen garments in summer, and furs in winter, with an under-garment of soft leather. The poorer people wore chiefly a kind of gray felt.

• Orion did well at school-work, and was especially successful at elocution and music. He studied well, and was at quite an early age much interested in his mother's philosophy, and in the services held in the temple of Pallas. He had unusual veneration for the High Priest Mercury, and often hung about the temple courts for hours just to get a glimpse of him. The High Priest often noticed him and spoke

kindly to him. While he was still a boy the priests of the dark temple of Tammuz tried by large promises to persuade him to pursue his studies with them, and he attended some of their functions. Their gorgeous ceremonies and elaborate ritual had a certain mystical attraction for him, yet he was often disgusted with them, for he instinctively felt that there was much of insincerity and impurity behind them, and even to enter that temple sometimes made him physically sick.

As he grew up he began to assist his father in the business; he took it up keenly and seemed rather avaricious, but he liked best the more adventurous part of the work—assisting in the loading of the strange-looking ships with bright blue sails, and sometimes even sailing in them to some neighbouring port. Proteus was then the controller of the port, and his son Selene, though four years younger than Orion, was his friend and frequent companion on such little expeditions, and they constantly discussed the philosophy which attracted them both so deeply. The interest in this continued steadily to increase, and at last quite overpowered Orion's business instincts, so that he went to the High Priest and asked whether he might resign worldly affairs and devote his life altogether to study and to temple work under him. A few days afterwards Orion was called up during one of the

services to the meteorite throne, and one of the highly-prized messages was delivered to him.

“Not yet,” it said, “can you have your desire. Once before your Master called you, and you would not come. There will come a time when He will ask you again; work *now* that you may be ready to answer *then*, so that through you the world may be blessed.”

Orion was tremendously impressed, and resolved that, although he might not enter the temple service, he would at least devote the greater part of his time each day to the study of philosophical truths. Though he had a keen sense of the pleasures of the world, he never forgot this resolution, and he made very good progress in the comprehension of the sacred truths put before him, constantly discussing every step with his mother, and often putting questions to the High Priest. He fell in love two or three times in the ordinary course, but voluntarily put away such thoughts from him lest they should interfere with his studies. His father regarded him as unpractical, because as time went on he cared less and less for business and devoted himself more and more to religion and philosophy, but his mother always sympathized with him and encouraged him.

In a way his life was uneventful, yet it developed self-control and self-reliance, for it was on the

whole a distinctly good life, though lived amidst much of corruption and temptation. He had reached the age of thirty-one when the city of Agadé was destroyed by an incursion of warlike barbarians from the interior, probably Scythians, and he was killed in the general massacre of the inhabitants. The priests of the temple of Pallas were warned through the sybils of the impending catastrophe, but were not allowed to tell the people ; they might perhaps have saved themselves, but preferred to stand with their countrymen to the last. The priests of the temple of Tammuz had been privy to the barbarian invasion, which was secretly invited by the Hittites in the hope that it might enable them successfully to revolt against the Greeks ; but when the attack came, the savage instincts of the robber hordes were too strong for them, and they slaughtered and plundered both races indiscriminately.

Orion's mother contrived to fly from the barbarians, and hid herself in a cave for a while, but unfortunately the roof of the cave collapsed and crushed her, so that she died with great suffering. The High Priest Mercury was killed with the rest, but his power was sufficient to enable him to take the body of a young fisherman who had been drowned in the effort to escape, and in that body he made his way by degrees to India, staying for

some time in Persia *en route*, working there as a goldsmith, and taking a prominent part in the founding of the modern form of Zoroastrianism.¹ In India he joined in the physical body his Master, who had appeared astrally and taught the initiates in the inner subterranean chambers of the temple of Agadé.

Selene was also killed in that massacre at the age of twenty-seven, and took birth next near Benares in the year 593 B.C. as Chatta Mānavaka but lived only for thirteen years, so that he and Orion were enabled to return simultaneously to the next life in Greece.²

XXIII

GREECE

Our hero took birth this time in one of the families of the Eupatridæ at Athens at a troublous and exciting time in Greek history—in the year 499 B.C. His name was Theodoros; his father was Kleomenes (Sirius); his mother Philippa (not one of our present group of *dramatis personæ*); his eldest brother Philalethes (Selene); his younger brother Kleon (Mira); and his little sister Agatha

¹ See *The Lives of Alcyone*, Life XLVI.

² See *The Lives of Alcyone*, Life XLVII

(Fomal). They were an especially happy and united family, and the ties of affection between them were very strong. The only weak spot was the second son Anaximandros (Ursa),¹ who did not seem quite to be one of them, had spasms of dislike for his home, and gave a good deal of trouble in various ways. Sirius took his share in the politics and fighting of the period, but his greatest interest was the Pythagorean school of philosophy. In his youth he had seen the great Pythagoras himself², and had been specially helped and instructed by his pupil Kleinias (Uranus), who afterwards came and settled in Athens and founded a school of philosophy there, of which all our characters were earnest students.

Uranus himself had as a wife Vesta, and Agathokles (Erato), the uncle of Orion, married Demeter, one of his daughters, so that the families were very intimate and were constantly together.

Sirius and Erato shared a large house on a hill facing the Acropolis, living on opposite sides of its great courtyard, so that they were practically one family. Erato was a celebrated sculptor, and has been mentioned in exoteric history; he attached to most of his works the assumed name of Kalamis. His two boys Bella and Ajax and his daughters

¹ *The Lives of Ursa*, Life X.

² See *The Lives of Erato*, Life XV.

Euphrosyne (Vega), and the younger (Psyche) were naturally prominent in the life of Orion, though most of them were a good deal younger than he. The girl Vega, for example, was nine years younger than Orion ; she was an exceedingly beautiful child and all the brothers were very fond of her. Some grand-children of Uranus were also among their playmates.

In spite of the constant wars and turmoils their life was a free and happy one, filled with a joy of living in the sunlight which it is difficult for us in these modern days to realize. The Greek race was a beautiful one, and great attention was paid to physical culture. Orion was handsome and graceful, full of life and vigour, and very good at sports and games. He had a fine intellect and learned quickly and easily. The education of the period was curiously different from ours, limited in certain directions but excellent in others. There was not much actual book-learning, and but little was known of the laws of nature as exemplified in such sciences as chemistry or astronomy. The endeavour was to wake up the faculties of the children rather than to load them with dry facts—to make their daily life bright, happy and active, and to teach them to discriminate between good and evil, and to appreciate the best in art and poetry. All children were taught to make poetry, to sing and to play upon the lyre and

the double flute, and Orion did well in all these lines. The maxims of philosophy were directly taught, but great reliance was also placed upon the influence of surroundings, and beautiful pictures and statues were always kept before the eyes of the children, and they were encouraged to try to reproduce them.

Orion excelled in clay-modelling, and was very often in his uncle's studio across the court. He studied under him later, and did some very good work, making copies in marble of some of his uncle's statues--notably of the boys upon horseback which Kalamis added to the great bronze group of Onatas at Olympia. These specially attracted him because he himself had been the model of one of the boys, and because he himself had taken part in the games at Olympia. He was very successful and once he won the crown of wild olive which was the greatest honour Greece had to give. He was a kind-hearted and sympathetic child, always anxious to relieve any suffering he saw; wayward and contrary sometimes, but capable of a glorious wealth of affection.

An unfortunate accident in early boyhood produced a considerable effect upon his character. He was always a peaceable child, and shrank from seeing anyone hurt, but on one occasion he lost his temper in some little quarrel and gave an angry push to a playmate when they were standing at the

top of the steps in front of his father's house. The other child fell over the side of the flight of steps to the ground beneath, and was seriously hurt, so that he was lame for some years. The grief and remorse of Orion were great, and he vowed again and again that he would never more strike a blow in a personal quarrel, no matter how great the provocation might be.

He kept his vow, though in later years he had to take part in the defence of his country like the other nobles. He was only nine years old at the time of the battle of Marathon, in which his father and uncle took part, so he naturally had no share in that great feat of arms, in which an army of over a hundred thousand Persians, under one of the best generals of the time, was defeated with great loss by a body of ten thousand Greeks. Many thousands of the Persians were slain, but fewer than two hundred of the Athenians, and Greece was left in peace for a short time.

The occasion on which Orion won the olive crown was of course one of great rejoicing for his family—the more so as it coincided with his initiation into the mysteries of Eleusis. There was a splendid procession in which the handsome boy, covered with garlands of flowers, was the prominent figure. His mother Philippa, who was always gentle, tender and sympathetic to her children,

watched with keen delight and pride. With her was Fomal, and also Helios and Achilles (the two grand daughters of Uranus) who had both fallen deeply in love with the young athlete. He quite reciprocated their affection, and might have found it difficult to choose between them, but presently the elder sister died, and when he was twenty-two he married the younger.

Before this, however, he had borne his part in some stirring events. His father was one of the Athenian delegates to the celebrated Congress at Corinth in 481 B.C. and both Selene and Orion accompanied him on this historic occasion. In the next year Xerxes advanced upon Athens with his mighty army of a million men—drawn, he boasted, from forty-six nations; and as successful resistance was impossible, all the Athenians had to withdraw from their homes, and take refuge on the islands. It was with deep regret that our family left their beautiful mansion, and no doubt the thought of it made them fight with additional valour at the great naval battle of Salamis. In this the Persian fleet was totally defeated, and Xerxes hurriedly marched his army back into Asia, leaving, however, thirty-three thousand men under his general Mardonius. Orion was brave enough in the battle, though horror seized him at the sight of wounds and blood, and he had difficulty to force himself to do his duty.

After the battle the family returned home, and were relieved to find that the Persians, though they had destroyed much of the town, had not reached their quarter. The same good fortune attended them next year when Athens had once more to be abandoned before the advance of Mardonius; and Orion played a noble part in the great battle of Plataea, when the Spartans under Pausanias at last came to the help of the Athenians, and the army of Mardonius was totally destroyed. Orion fought well in the wild charges of the earlier part of the battle, but when the Asiatic soldiers were at last surrounded in their camp and the final massacre, which destroyed for ever the power of Persia, had commenced, he turned sick at the awful carnage and had to leave the field.

Once more they all returned home, this time not to leave it again, and Orion began to take part in political life. At this time there were two great parties in Athens, which might be described as in some sense corresponding to Conservatives and Liberals. Aristides was the head of the Conservative section; he wished to keep everything as in the ancient days, and had vehemently opposed even the building of the fleet that had saved Europe at Salamis. Indeed, he had made so much trouble that he had been exiled a few years before that battle, though he patriotically cast aside all differences of opinion and returned to help in it. The

Liberal party on the other hand said that the world was changing, that the old feudal times of the landlords' domination were passed, and that Athens must develop her commerce and have ships to protect it.

The leader of this party was Themistokles, and to him Orion attached himself with great admiration for his clever plans. Themistokles was an exceedingly clever man, and did much for the good of his country, but he was unfortunately unscrupulous in his methods. His ideas were usually excellent, and Orion believed in him, supported him hotly, and would hear no evil of him. Orion's first public speech, which he delivered before he was twenty, was in favour of Themistokles' scheme of fortifications for Athens and the Piraeus. He spoke well and forcefully, with an admirable choice of words, and putting a great deal of feeling into what he said. He also spoke several times in favour of the foundation of the Confederacy of Delos two years later, just about the time of his marriage in 477 B.C. He had six children, the sweetest of them being Anastasia (Theseus).

Themistokles was at the height of his power during the six years after Orion's marriage, and Orion was very useful to him in many ways, though never in any of his doubtful transactions. However, by degrees the boastfulness and injustice of Themistokles made the Athenians hate him, and in the year

471 B.C. there was a determined movement against him and he was ostracized, and went to live at Argos. Orion was very indignant at this, and voluntarily shared his exile ; but it was gradually forced upon him that his hero was not faultless, and it was a great sorrow to him to discover it. When, four years later, the complicity of Themistokles in the disgraceful conspiracy of Pausanias was clearly proved, Themistokles fled to Persia, and Orion returned home.

Meanwhile Aristides had died, and Kimon, the son of Miltiades, had succeeded him as leader of the Conservatives ; while in place of Themistokles the Liberal leader was now a noble named Perikles. For the first few years after the return of Orion the Conservative party had the advantage, but presently there was a change of policy, and Perikles came into power. With slight intermissions he retained his position until his death thirty-three years later, and during all that time Orion served and supported him faithfully. He came to have great weight in the councils of Athens, and was regarded as one of the finest orators of a peculiarly brilliant type. He was of great assistance to Perikles, because of his thorough-going support of all the reforms introduced. Perikles seems to have been fully worthy of this devotion, not only in his eloquence and wisdom, but also in the nobleness of his

character. His central idea was to develop intelligence and good taste in every Athenian citizen, and then to trust them to govern themselves. He encouraged art, poetry and music to the utmost, and Orion did well along all these lines. He avoided taking any part in the numerous foreign wars, but he fought beside his father along with the "boys and the old men" at Megara against the Corinthians; he was put by Perikles in charge of the building of two tremendous walls, four miles long and two hundred yards apart, which connected Athens with the Piraeus.

The next twenty-five years was a time of great progress for him, for though he still spoke frequently upon political subjects, he devoted himself mainly to the study of preaching and philosophy, his discourses upon which were considered most ennobling and successful. After the death of Kleinias, Cleomenes (Sirius) had become one of the leaders of the school, and when he died in 454 B.C., Philaethes (Selene) and Orion took his place, and the latter continued to occupy a prominent position in that work until his own death thirty-one years later. He and his wife, though both then old people, distinguished themselves greatly by the active and untiring help which they gave when the plague devastated Athens in the year 430 B.C.

A particularly close tie of affection bound him to his brother-in-law Aldeb, and also to his younger

brother Mira, both of whom worked nobly with him in his efforts to relieve the sufferings of the plague-stricken and to prevent the spread of the disease. He finally passed away peacefully in the year 423 B.C., at the age of seventy-six, thus ending an exceedingly useful life, in which much talent had been developed in more than one direction. The mere company of such men as those among whom he moved was in itself a great help to evolution. Not only was he associated with Aristides and Perikles, but with Aeschylus, Sophokles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Phidias. But most of all was learnt from the connection with Kleinias and his school, guided as that was by the teaching of the great master Pythagoras (Mercury). It was the study of this philosophy and of the inner side of the Mysteries which, together with his splendid power of affection, gave him his long heaven-life of two thousand and twenty years. The chief characteristics of Greek life were its keenness and quickness, its love of knowledge and of beauty, its power of creating beautiful things, its joy in life and sunlight ; and all these had their part in the production of surroundings so exceptionally favourable.

XXIV

VENICE

After a long period out of incarnation, Orion returned in 1597 A.D. as Leonardo, the second son of Nu, a Venetian nobleman whose family name was Minuccio—a kindly generous man, but somewhat dissolute, proud and overbearing. He was much occupied with the intrigues and plots of the time, and did not care much for religion, though he was superstitious about many things. His mother, Muni, was very fond of him and very kind when she happened to think of it, but most of her life was devoted to dress and to flirtations, with the various gallants of the city. So it came about that the little Leonardo was left almost entirely to the care of Gamma, an old nurse from the south of Italy—a good and kind-hearted woman, but incredibly ignorant and full of the most astonishing superstitions. She filled his mind with wild stories of knights and dragons, and of fights against the infidel for the sake of the faith. Even more impossible were some of her stories of the saints and martyrs of the Church; but they fired the boy's imagination, and probably were largely responsible for his desire to join one of the monastic orders.

He liked to see the gay trappings of the knights, but though by no means a coward, he always shrank from the thought of the blood and slaughter which attended a military career, and in those days the army and the Church were the only spheres of activity that were open to the nobility. The powers of the bishops and the Church were enormous, and the family had sufficient wealth and interest to secure rapid promotion, so no opposition was offered to his choice, especially as there was an elder brother to carry on the knightly traditions of the race and sustain its honour in the field.

Orion was a romantic boy; he constantly invented stories of which he himself was the hero. He delighted greatly in the beautiful paintings in the churches, and in the quaint architecture of that wonderful city, and he often sat on the Piazza, lost in the contemplation of the beauties of San Marco, or climbed the Campanile to enjoy the view over the domes and the sea. He was particularly attracted to the four bronze horses, but he did not know that it was because he had seen them before, and indeed had watched the casting of them.¹ He was very musical, and had a good voice; and he frequently accompanied himself on the guitar. He received most of his instruction from the family chaplain, who highly approved of his desire to

¹ See *The Lives of Erato*, Life XV.

become a monk, and told him encouraging stories of the saints and the glories of heaven, varied with lurid pictures of the fate reserved for heretics and enemies of the church.

Thus his childhood passed, surrounded by all the evidences of lavish wealth, but with very little real sympathetic or deep affection. He had a heart full of intense love, but no legitimate outlet for it, so it was only natural that he should fall in love at the first opportunity. The young lady whom he selected was Egeria, who was the daughter of a wealthy merchant-neighbour, and therefore much below him in station. She was supposed to be seeking information on religious subjects from the young postulant, and nobody seemed to have scented any danger in their frequent intercourse, since he was only seventeen years old, and she perhaps a year younger. The relations between them went further than their friends expected, and after a time the young lady's condition could no longer be concealed. There was a tremendous disturbance; the young lady was so harshly treated by her parents that she threw herself into the canal and was drowned, and Orion was hurried off in disgrace to escape popular execration, and placed in a monastery in the town of Padua.

He was full of remorse about the suicide of his young friend, yet he could not understand that his

conduct had been as wicked as his superiors evidently thought it. The severest penances were laid upon him, and by degrees he began to believe what the monks told him. The view of religion held in the Paduan monastery was the gloomiest possible, and though he lived the life of fasting and austerities with the rest, he was never happy or satisfied with it all. He was ever seeking for what he never found, for all unknown to himself there was within him a half-memory of the joyous open-air life of Greece, and the contrast between that and the unnaturally gloomy asceticism of a mediæval monastery was too great.

He bore it for five miserable years, trying to make the best of the life, and to find in it what some of his fellows seemed to find, yet always knowing deep down in his heart that there was something much better and more natural than this. Then he pined away and died—died nominally of a sort of low fever, but really because he had lost the will to live. This was rather a negative incarnation, though it taught something of the necessity for self-control; but at least it served its purpose of carrying him on to the present time, and making possible a birth which would give him all the present opportunities. The seduction and suicide of the girl no doubt made undesirable karma, though perhaps less than we might think, for it was

the result of ignorance and carelessness, not of any evil intent ; and the person most responsible was certainly his old nurse Gamma, who promoted and encouraged the affair out of blind love for her young master, thinking it would be a cheerful and beneficial influence in his life, but never dreaming of the possible result for the other party.

Note. " The Lives of Orion " is the third in the series " The Soul's Growth through Reincarnation ". The first and second in the series are " The Lives of Erato " and " The Lives of Spica ".

C. JINARĀJADĀSA

